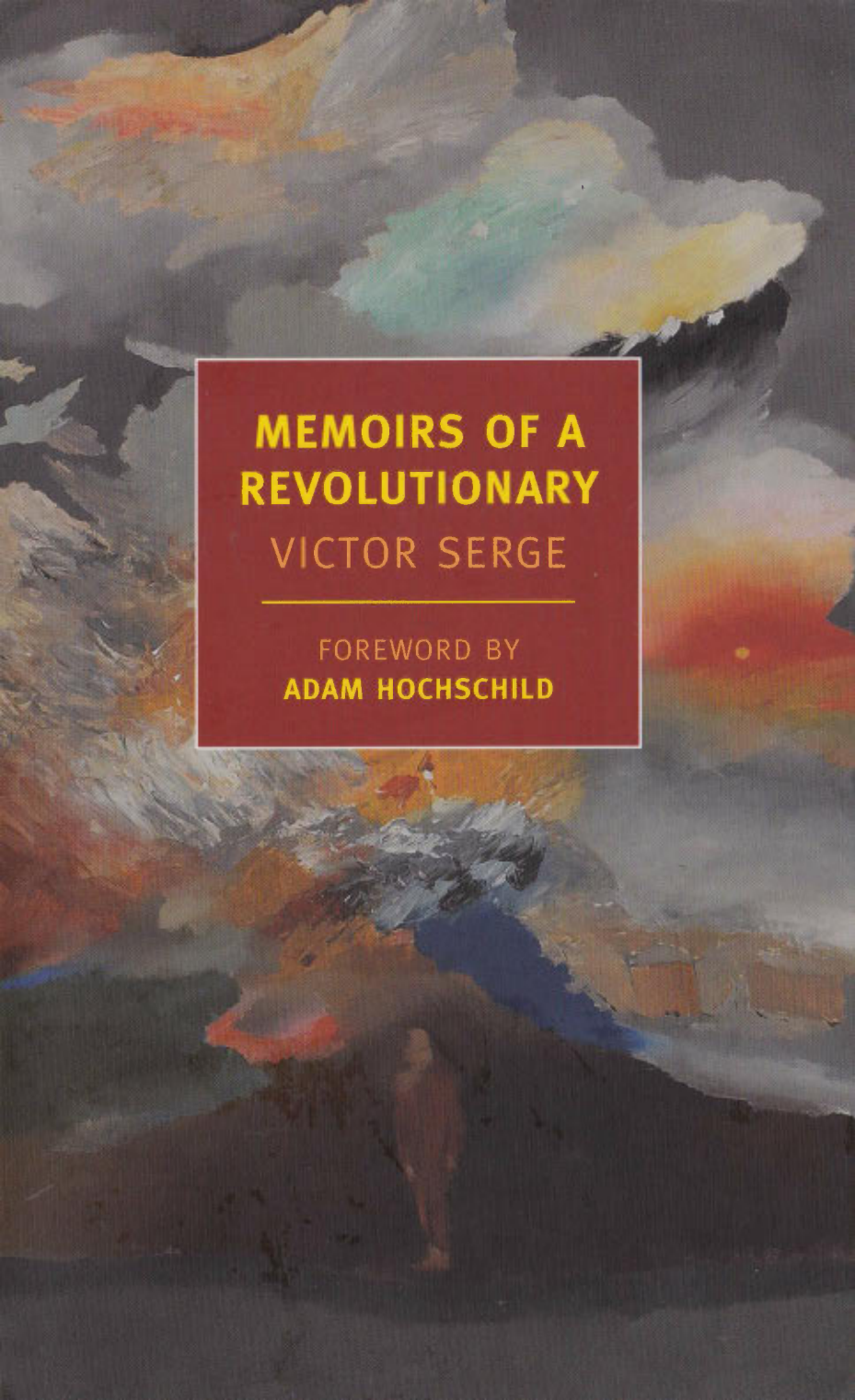

MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONARY
VICTOR SERGE
FOREWORD BY
ADAM HOCHSCHILD

NEW YORK REVIEW BOOKS
CLASSICS

MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONARY

VICTOR SERGE (1890–1947) was born Victor Lvovich Kibalchich to Russian anti-Tsarist exiles, impoverished intellectuals living "by chance" in Brussels. A precocious anarchist firebrand, young Victor was sentenced to five years in a French penitentiary in 1912. Expelled to Spain in 1917, he participated in an anarcho-syndicalist uprising before leaving to join the Revolution in Russia. Detained for more than a year in a French concentration camp, Serge arrived in St. Petersburg early in 1919 and joined the Bolsheviks, serving in the press services of the Communist International. An outspoken critic of Stalin, Serge was expelled from the Party and arrested in 1929. Nonetheless, he managed to complete three novels (*Men in Prison*, *Birth of Our Power*, and *Conquered City*) and a history (*Year One of the Russian Revolution*), published in Paris. Arrested again in Russia and deported to Central Asia in 1933, he was allowed to leave the USSR in 1936 after international protests by militants and prominent writers like André Gide and Romain Rolland. Using his insider's knowledge, Serge published a stream of impassioned, documented exposés of Stalin's Moscow show trials and of machinations in Spain, which went largely unheeded. Stateless, penniless, hounded by Stalinist agents, Serge lived in precarious exile in Brussels, Paris, Vichy France, and Mexico City, where he died in 1947. His classic *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* and his great last novels, *Unforgiving Years* and *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* (both available as NYRB Classics), were written "for the desk drawer" and published posthumously.

PETER SEDGWICK (1934–1983) translated and wrote the introductions for Victor Serge's *Memoirs* and *Year One of the Russian Revolution*. A lifelong activist and a founding member of the New

Left in Britain, he wrote seminal essays on Serge. In addition to his journalism and political writings, he is the author of a book, *Psycho-Politics*.

ADAM HOCHSCHILD has written for *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The Nation*. His books include *King Leopold's Ghost* and, most recently, *To End All Wars*. He teaches at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley.

GEORGE PAIZIS is the author of *Marcel Martinet: Poet of the Revolution*, *Love and the Novel: The Poetics and Politics of Romantic Fiction*, and, with Andrew N. Leak, *The Holocaust and the Text: Speaking the Unspeakable*. He is a longstanding member of the Socialist Workers Party and until recently was Senior Lecturer in the French Department at University College London.

RICHARD GREEMAN has translated and written the introductions for five of Serge's novels (including *Unforgiving Years* and *Conquered City*, both available as NYRB Classics). A veteran Socialist and co-founder of the Praxis Center and Victor Serge Library in Moscow, Russia (www.praxiscenter.ru), Greeman is author of *Beware Of "Vegetarian" Sharks: Radical Rants And Internationalist Essays*.

MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONARY

VICTOR SERGE

Translated from the French by
PETER SEDGWICK *with*
GEORGE PAIZIS

Glossary and notes by
RICHARD GREEMAN

Foreword by
ADAM HOCHSCHILD

NEW YORK REVIEW BOOKS
nyrb
New York

"Victor Serge's Political Testament," Richard Greeman's new afterword to Memoirs of a Revolutionary, *has been posted at www.nyrb.com/greeman-serge.*

THIS IS A NEW YORK REVIEW BOOK
PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS
435 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014
www.nyrb.com

Copyright © 1951 by Editions du Seuil
Translation copyright © 2012 by the Victor Serge Foundation
Foreword copyright © 2002, 2012 by Adam Hochschild
All rights reserved.

First published in French as *Mémoires d'un révolutionnaire* by Editions du Seuil, 1951; first published in English by Oxford University Press, London, 1963

The publishers would like to thank Richard Greeman for his work in assembling and annotating the photographs in the present volume.

Serge, Victor, 1890–1947.
[Mémoires d'un révolutionnaire. English]
Memoirs of a revolutionary / Victor Serge ; [translated by] Peter Sedgwick ; [foreword by] Adam Hochschild.
p. cm. — (New York Review Books classics)
ISBN 978-1-59017-451-7 (pbk.)
1. Serge, Victor, 1890-1947. 2. Revolutionaries—Soviet Union—Biography.
3. Soviet Union—History—1917–1936. 4. Soviet Union—History—1925–1953.
I. Sedgwick, Peter, 1934–1983. II. Title.
DK254.S39A313 2011
947.084'1'092—dc22
[B]
2011020475

ISBN 978-1-59017-451-7

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

CONTENTS

Foreword by Adam Hochschild · vii

Translator's Introduction by Peter Sedgwick · xxiii

About the Translation by Richard Greeman · xli

1. World Without Possible Escape: 1906–1912 · 3
2. Live to Prevail: 1912–1919 · 53
3. Anguish and Enthusiasm: 1919–1920 · 82
4. Danger from Within: 1920–1921 · 135
5. Europe at the Dark Crossroads: 1922–1926 · 184
6. Deadlock of the Revolution: 1926–1928 · 227
7. The Years of Resistance: 1928–1933 · 283
8. The Years of Captivity: 1933–1936 · 329
9. Defeat in the West: 1936–1941 · 376
10. Looking Forward · 436

Epilogue: The Death of Serge · 449

Glossary · 451

English Translations of Serge's Work · 501

About the Images · 505

Index · 507

FOREWORD*

Our Night with Its Stars Askew

SOME YEARS ago I was at a conference of writers and journalists from various countries. A group of a dozen or more of us were talking, and someone asked that each person say who was the political writer whom he or she most admired. When my turn came, I named Victor Serge. A man I did not know abruptly leapt to his feet, strode across the room, and embraced me. He turned out to be Rafael Barajas of Mexico, who under the pen name of El Fisgón is one of Latin America's leading political cartoonists.

It is rare when a writer inspires instant brotherhood among strangers. And rarer still when the writing involved is not fiction or poetry (although Victor Serge was a good novelist and poet) but a work of nonfiction. For me, and for others in many parts of the world, Serge's greatness lies above all in the book you are holding.

Victor Serge began and ended his life in exile, and spent much of it either in prison or in flight from various governments trying to put him there. He was born Victor Kibalchich in 1890; his parents were Russian revolutionaries who had fled to Belgium. He had little formal schooling. As a child he often had only bread soaked in coffee to eat. In Brussels, he recalled, "On the walls of our humble and makeshift lodgings there were always the portraits of men who had been hanged."

As a teenager in a radical group he was one of the tiny handful of people in Belgium who boldly criticized King Leopold II's rule over the Congo, then the most brutal colonial regime in Africa. But he

*Adapted, in part, from Adam Hochschild, *Finding the Trapdoor: Essays, Portraits, Travels* (Syracuse University Press, 1997), and *The Unquiet Ghost: Russians Remember Stalin* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003).

went farther than others in taking a stand against colonialism itself—a rare position in Europe at that time. He left home while still in his teens, lived in a French mining village, worked as a typesetter, and finally made his way to Paris. There he lived with beggars, read Balzac, and grew fascinated by the underworld. But soon the revolutionary in him overcame the wanderer. He became an anarchist and the editor of one of the movement's newspapers. For refusing to testify against some comrades he was sentenced, at age twenty-two, to five years in a French maximum security prison. Released in 1917, he eventually managed to make his way to revolutionary Russia—the ancestral homeland he had never seen.

He arrived in early 1919 in a country engulfed in civil war. This brutal conflict, which took several million lives, was between the Bolsheviks and the counterrevolutionary White forces—mostly led by former Tsarist generals, and supplied by England, France, and the United States. Although a supporter of the Russian Revolution, he became quickly agonized by the other, more sinister battle the Bolsheviks were fighting, against virtually all the other parties of the Left. They had closed down Russia's first democratically elected legislature and were now busy executing many of their political opponents.

He spent most of the next seventeen years in Russia, writing under the name Victor Serge. Among the many shrill and angry voices of that time, his still rings clear and true today. Serge never abandoned his passion for civil liberties or his sympathy for the free spirits who didn't toe the Bolshevik line. "The telephone became my personal enemy," he wrote. "At every hour it brought me voices of panic-stricken women who spoke of arrest, imminent executions, and injustice, and begged me to intervene at once, for the love of God!"

Yet the White armies were attacking from all directions; Serge felt it was no time for intellectuals, however right their criticisms, to be on the sidelines. "Even if there were only one chance in a hundred for the regeneration of the revolution and its workers' democracy," he later wrote, "that chance had to be taken." He worked as an official of the Communist International and served as a militia officer fighting the Whites. At one point he was in charge of examining the captured archives of the Okhrana, the Tsarist secret police. At the same time he

continued to be appalled by the growth of a new secret police regime around him, and argued ceaselessly against the straitjacketed press, the arrests, the closed trials, and the death penalty for political prisoners.

As he watched the Soviet bureaucracy grow ever more oppressive, Serge became more convinced than ever that political power should be decentralized and given to the small community and the workplace. He and some like-minded friends tried to build a miniature version of the society they believed in by founding a communal farm on an abandoned estate where "we would live close to the earth." But, surrounded by turmoil, famine, and distrustful villagers, the experiment didn't last.

Before long, Serge was expelled from the Communist Party. In 1928, Stalin clapped him in jail. Always alert to irony, Serge talked to one of his guards and found that he had served in the same job under the Tsar. A few days after his release from prison, Serge wrote, "I was laid out by an unendurable abdominal pain; for twenty-four hours I was face-to-face with death.... And I reflected that I had labored, striven, and schooled myself titanically, without producing anything valuable or lasting. I told myself, 'If I chance to survive, I must be quick and finish the books I have begun: I must write, write...' I thought of what I would write, and mentally sketched the plan of a series of documentary novels about these unforgettable times."

And write he did. In all of his books, and particularly in this one, his masterpiece, his prose has a searing, vivid, telegraphic compactness. Serge's style comes not from endless refinement and rewriting, like Flaubert's, but from the urgency of being a man on the run. The police are at the door; his friends are being arrested; he must get the news out; every word must tell. And he is not like the novelist in a calmer society who searches and experiments to find exactly the right subject at last; *his* subject—the Russian Revolution and its aftermath—almost killed him. During Stalin's dictatorship, it is estimated today, somewhere between ten and twenty million Soviets met unnatural deaths—from the deliberate famine brought on by the forced collectivization of agriculture, from the firing squads, and from the Arctic and Siberian network of labor camps that devoured victims of mass arrests. Driven by Stalin's increasing paranoia, these arrests and

executions peaked in the Great Purge of the late 1930s, when millions of Soviet citizens were seized in midnight raids. Many were never seen by their families again.

Serge's opposition to Soviet tyranny meant that his work could never be published in Stalin's USSR, but his radicalism long kept much of it out of print in the United States as well. Today, however, he has won due recognition at last. Recent decades have seen studies and articles about him by many writers and a biography by Susan Weissman; Richard Greeman has translated a number of his novels into English for the first time; older editions of other Serge books have been reprinted; and there is now even a Victor Serge Library in Moscow. These memoirs of his life belong on the same small shelf as the other great political testaments of the twentieth century, books like Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*. Orwell felt akin to Serge, and tried unsuccessfully to find him a British publisher.

Serge was part of the generation that at first saw the Russian Revolution as an epochal step forward from the political system which, in the First World War, had just taken the lives of more than nine million soldiers, and left twenty-one million wounded and millions of civilian dead as well. His great hopes make all the more poignant his clear-eyed picture of the gathering darkness as the Revolution turned slowly into a vast self-inflicted genocide. It was the era when, as a character in his novel *Conquered City* says, "We have conquered everything, and everything has slipped out of our grasp." A poem Serge wrote captures the same feeling:

> If we roused the peoples and made the continents quake,
> ... began to make everything anew with these dirty old stones,
> these tired hands, and the meager souls that were left us,
> it was not in order to haggle with you now,
> sad revolution, our mother, our child, our flesh,
> our decapitated dawn, our night with its stars askew...

Serge's eyewitness account of this "decapitated dawn" is nowhere more tragic than in chapter 6 of this volume, where he describes coming back to Russia in 1926 after a mission abroad. "A return to Russian

soil rends the heart. '*Earth of Russia*,' wrote the poet Tyutchev, '*no corner of you is untouched by Christ the slave.*' The Marxist explains it in the same terms: 'The production of commodities was never sufficient...'" In the countryside, hungry poor have taken to the roads. The streets of Leningrad are filled with beggars, abandoned children, prostitutes. "The hotels laid on for foreigners and Party officials have bars that are complete with tables covered in soiled white linen, dusty palm trees, and alert waiters who know secrets beyond the Revolution's ken." One after another, people Serge knows and admires—labor organizers, poets, veteran revolutionaries—commit suicide.

In 1933, Stalin had Serge arrested again, and exiled him and his family to the remote city of Orenburg, in the Ural mountains. People were starving; children clawed each other in the streets for a piece of bread. Serge became fast friends with the other political exiles there, a small group of men and women who shared food and ideas, nursed one another through illnesses, and kept each other alive.

Fluent in five languages, Serge did almost all his writing in French. By the time of his exile in Orenburg, his books and articles had won him a small but loyal following among independent leftists in the West who were alarmed by both Fascism and Stalinism. In 1936, protests by French intellectuals finally won him the right to leave Russia. This was the year that the Great Purge began in earnest, with mass arrests and executions on a scale unmatched in Russian history. Serge's release from the Soviet Union almost certainly saved his life. The secret police seized all copies of the manuscripts of two new books he had written, including the novel he thought his best. Thanks to his exile, Serge said wryly, these were "the only works I have ever had the opportunity to revise at leisure." People have searched repeatedly for these manuscripts in Russian archives intermittently opened since the end of Communism, but with no success.

When he arrived from Russia in Western Europe, Serge's politics again made him an outsider. Neither mainstream nor Communist newspapers would publish his articles, and the European Communist parties attacked him ferociously. His primary forum was a small labor paper in Belgium. There, and in a stream of new books and pamphlets, he railed against the Great Purge, defended the Spanish Republic, and

spoke out against the Western powers for accommodating Hitler. These ideas were not popular. To make ends meet he had to work at his old trade as a typesetter and proofreader, sometimes correcting the galleys of newspapers that would not publish his writing.

Meanwhile, Stalin's agents roamed Western Europe, on occasion assassinating members of the opposition in exile. Back in the Soviet Union things were still worse: Serge's sister, mother-in-law, two brothers-in-law, and two sisters-in-law disappeared into the Gulag. His wife, Liuba Russakova, became psychotic and had to be put in a French mental hospital. The Germans invaded France; when Nazi tanks reached the suburbs of Paris, Serge left the city. The United States refused him a visa. The Nazis burned his books. Just ahead of the Gestapo, he and his teenage son left Marseilles on a ship to Mexico.

One of the many unexpected things about Serge's memoirs is that the book he thought he was writing is not exactly the one we admire him for today.

In both this book and some twenty others—fiction, nonfiction, biography, history, and poetry—his driving passion was to rescue the honor of the idealists who participated in the Russian Revolution from the Stalinists who took it over and turned it into a horror show. It is easy to understand Serge's feelings. He grew up acutely aware of the injustices of the Europe of his day, bled white by the horrendous war of 1914–18, and poured all his energy and talent into the Revolution that promised to end them. But looking back on those times today, we cannot share Serge's hope that the fractious Left Oppositionists who coalesced around Leon Trotsky could have created the good society in Russia, even though surely none of them would have constructed a charnel house as murderous as Stalin's. And, indeed, Serge's brilliant capsule portrait of Trotsky in these pages shows both the man's wide-ranging intellect and his harsh, authoritarian streak.

What moves us in this book now is not so much Serge's vision of what the Revolution might have been. It is, rather, two qualities of the man himself.

The first is his ability to see the world with unflinching clarity. In the Soviet Union's first decade and a half, despite arrests, ostracism, theft of his manuscripts, and not having enough to eat, he bore witness. This was rare. Although other totalitarian regimes, left and right, have had naïve, besotted admirers before and since, never has there been a tyranny praised by so many otherwise sane intellectuals. George Bernard Shaw traveled to Russia in the midst of the man-made famine of the 1930s and declared that there was food enough for everyone. Walter Duranty, the Pulitzer Prize–winning *New York Times* correspondent in Moscow, downplayed reports of famine as a gross exaggeration. In Soviet Russia the great muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens saw, in his famous phrase, the future that worked. An astonishing variety of other Westerners, from the Dean of Canterbury to American ambassador Joseph Davies, saw mainly a society full of happy workers and laughing children. American vice president Henry Wallace made an official visit during World War II to the Kolyma region, on the Soviet Union's Pacific coast. It was then the site of the densest concentration of forced labor camps ever seen on earth, but Wallace and his entourage never noticed anything amiss. By contrast with all these cheerful visitors, Victor Serge had what Orwell, in another context, called the "power of facing unpleasant facts."

Serge's other great virtue is his novelist's eye for human character. He never lets his intense political commitment blind him to life's humor and paradox, its sensuality and beauty. You can see this in photographs of him as well, which show kindly, ironic eyes that seem to be both sad and amused by something, set in a modest, bearded face. "I have always believed," he writes, "that human qualities find their physical expression in a man's personal appearance." In what other revolutionary's autobiography could you find something like this thumbnail sketch of a French Communist Serge knew in Russia?

> Guilbeaux's whole life was a perfect example of the failure who, despite all his efforts, skirts the edge of success without ever managing to achieve it.... He wrote cacophonous poetry, kept a card index full of gossip about his comrades, and plagued the Cheka [the secret police] with confidential notes. He wore

green shirts and pea-green ties with greenish suits; everything about him, including his crooked face and his eyes, seemed to have a touch of mold. (He died in Paris, about 1938, by then an anti-Semite, having published two books proving Mussolini to be the only true successor of Lenin.)

In Serge's best novel, *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, three members of the Trotskyist opposition meet on skis in the woods outside Moscow. They talk of the injustices around them, agree that things are hopeless and that prison and early death probably await them; then they have a snowball fight. In *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, Serge describes fighting White saboteurs on the rooftops of Petrograd in 1919, during the "white night" of the far northern summer, "overlooking a sky-blue canal. Men fled before us, firing their revolvers at us from behind the chimney pots....The men we were after escaped, but I treasured an unforgettable vision of the city, seen at 3 a.m. in all its magical paleness."

After I first discovered Serge's writings, I tried to look for traces of him in Russia. In the summer of 1978, I visited what Serge called "this city that I love above all." When he first arrived there it was Petrograd, later Leningrad, and today once again is, as it was a century ago, St. Petersburg. I began at the Smolny Institute. Before the Revolution, the Smolny was Russia's most exclusive girls' finishing school, under the personal patronage of the Tsarina. In 1917 the Bolsheviks took it over as their headquarters and planned their coup d'état from classrooms where daughters of the aristocracy had once studied French and Latin. Serge had his office here, as the infant Revolution defended itself against the attacking White armies. In one of his novels, he describes how the barrels of cannons poked out between the school's elegant columns.

Now I found the building closed to the public; the grounds were a park. Fountains played; a warm breeze rustled the trees. Two old men talked on a bench. There was no suggestion of the history that had taken place at this spot; it felt ghostly by its absence. By 10 p.m. the

sun had just set, but the sky still glowed with the same mysterious "magical paleness" that had caught Serge's eye, even while he was being shot at, so many decades before.

In October 1919, when the Revolution was menaced from all sides, Serge took up arms in defense of this city. He fought in the decisive hillside battle that turned back the White Army at Pulkovo Heights, site of an old observatory outside the city. Some sixty years later, a puzzled cabdriver waited while my wife and I climbed the hill at Pulkovo. A beech grove shaded us from the hot sun. On one side, a peasant woman in a red kerchief walked slowly around the edge of a field, in search of something—wildflowers? mushrooms? From the hilltop we could see the distant city. On the horizon was a gleam of gold from the towers of the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. This hill was as far as the White Army got. When the Whites fell back, the tide of the Russian Civil War turned, the battles died away, but the Russia that took shape was not the one that Serge had risked his life for.

On another day we went in search of the apartment where Victor Serge and his family had lived. It was on a street lined with weathered stone buildings where gates to enclosed courtyards seemed to open onto another century. I found the right building and mounted marble steps still lined by a pre-Revolutionary wrought-iron railing and banister. Outside the large wooden door on the top floor, there was no telling which bell to ring, because it was a communal apartment, with seven doorbells for the seven families who lived there. I picked one. A tenant said, "Wait. I'll get someone. She has lived here many years."

We remained on the landing. Finally a woman came out: stocky, broad-faced, with gold teeth and slightly suspicious eyes. She said she was sixty years old; she had lived in this apartment since she was seven. No, she said, defying my arithmetic, she did not remember the man I was asking about in my clumsy Russian—although, oddly, she did recall the Russakovs, Serge's wife's family. But when asked about Serge, she shook her head firmly, arms crossed on her chest. Another *nyet* came when I asked if we could come in. Evidently she feared getting into trouble if she allowed a foreigner into the apartment. Anyway, she added, the whole place has been remodeled, so it is not the same as when this man—is he a relative of yours?—lived here.

Curiously, despite the noes, she was happy to talk, and we stood on the landing for more than half an hour. I peered past her, trying to glimpse inside. According to Serge, the apartment had been hastily abandoned by a high Tsarist official and still had a grand piano. In the bookcase had been the many volumes of *Laws of the Empire*, which, savoring the symbolism, Serge burned for heat one by one in the winter months of early 1919.

I brought up Serge's name again, and suddenly her eyes narrowed. "This man—was he an anarchist?"

"Aha, so you *do* remember him!"

"No." Her arms crossed again firmly; she shook her head. "Absolutely not."

That evening, back at our hotel, I checked some dates in these memoirs. If she told me her age correctly, this woman was ten when the police knocked on that same door at midnight and arrested Serge the first time. And she was fifteen when, in front of a pharmacy still standing on a nearby corner, he was arrested again and sent into exile in the Urals. Fifteen years old. A family she shared a kitchen with. Could she really have forgotten? Did she only remember the "anarchist" from some later denunciation? Then I noticed another passage in the memoirs. Serge says that in the mid-1920s, the Soviet authorities moved a young secret police officer "plus his wife, child, and grandmother" into the communal apartment to keep an eye on him. The dates fit. Was this woman the child?

Even crossing the Atlantic to Mexico, on the final flight of his exile-filled life, Serge never allowed himself to *feel* exiled. An internationalist always, he felt at home wherever there were people who shared his beliefs. He recorded the clenched-fist salute his shipload of anti-Nazi refugees got from Spanish fishermen; he organized even at sea: "Out in the Atlantic, past the Sahara coast, the stars pitch up and down above our heads. We hold a meeting on the upper deck, between the funnel and the lifeboats."

In Mexico he stayed true to his vision as both a radical and a believer in free speech, and again met resistance. Communist Party

thugs at one point shot at him; on another occasion they attacked a meeting where he was speaking, injuring some seventy people, many of them seriously. His young daughter was covered with blood, from stab wounds in the body of a man who had bent over her to protect her. His politics cut off his access to both the mainstream and leftist, pro-Soviet Mexican press. Book publishers were no better. He wrote anyway, finishing both his panoramic novel of the Great Purge, *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, and these memoirs. He tried and failed to find an American publisher for the memoirs, and neither book appeared before his death, at the age of fifty-six, in 1947.

These pages are, among many other things, a gallery of firsthand sketches of an astonishingly large proportion of the significant left-wing writers and political figures of the first half of the twentieth century. One portrait is of Serge's friend Adolf Joffe. A Russian Jew, Joffe was from the generation of revolutionaries whose desire to change the world was matched by a deep, free-ranging curiosity about it. He read widely, and as an exile in Vienna before World War I, underwent psychoanalysis by Freud's disciple Alfred Adler. From a wealthy family, he donated his entire inheritance to the revolutionary movement. He was originally trained as a doctor, and, writes Serge, he "reminded one of a wise physician . . . who had been summoned to the bedside of a dying patient." After the Revolution, Joffe became a Soviet diplomat. In 1927, he returned to Moscow from his post as ambassador to Japan, seriously ill and in despair at the direction the Revolution had taken. As an act of protest, he committed suicide, leaving behind a message saying that he hoped his death would help "reawaken the Party and halt it on the path that leads to Thermidor."

Serge came to Joffe's apartment and helped to organize the procession that accompanied Joffe's body to Moscow's Novodevichy cemetery. The authorities tried to foil the march at every step. Even the most pessimistic of the marchers could not have imagined that theirs was to be the last antigovernment mass demonstration permitted in Moscow for the next sixty years.

In 1991, sixty-four years after Joffe's death, I went to see his daughter

Nadezhda at her apartment in Moscow. Stalin had wiped out his opponents and their family members with such thoroughness that it was amazing to find one of them still alive. Nadezhda Joffe had spent some two decades of her life in prison camps and internal exile. A vibrant, gray-haired woman of eighty-five, she was probably the last person alive in Russia who had once known Victor Serge. As the spring sun streamed through her window, we spent a morning talking about him and her father and the Russia that might have been if people like them had prevailed. Just before I left, she told me a story.

"A descendant of the Decembrists [reformer aristocrats who rebelled against the Tsar in the 1820s] sees a crowd demonstrating in the street and she sends her daughter outside: 'Masha! Go and see what's going on.'

"Masha returns and says, 'Lots of people are out on the street.'

"'What do they want?'

"'They're demanding that no one should be rich.'

"'That's strange,' says the woman. 'My grandfather went out onto the street and demanded that no one should be poor.'"

The artist in Victor Serge would have liked this parable, I think. And the idealist in him would have liked its hint of the path not taken, of a revolution leading to a better society and not to one drenched in blood. He would have been in the grandfather's crowd and not the later one. In this book you will find a man who saw both types of crowds—humans at their best and at their worst—and who left us a record of the world he knew in a voice of rare integrity.

One last visit, this one in April 2002, Cuernavaca, Mexico. Outside the open door bursts of lush green vegetation climb everywhere; sunlight reflects dazzlingly from whitewashed walls. Inside, this one-room building seems almost the size of a small gymnasium. The ceiling is dotted with more than a dozen skylights. Oil paintings lean against the walls; a table is piled high with black-and-white prints; and to one side is a large, old-fashioned, iron printmaking machine, with a big wheel that must be turned slowly by hand. At the far end of

the room, against the back wall, is a work in progress, a giant canvas more than twenty-three feet high, a symphony of brilliant colors.

The artist who has welcomed a friend and me to his studio is Vlady Kibalchich, Victor Serge's eighty-one-year-old son. Three years later he would be dead, but on this spring day he is a spry, gray-haired man with a warm face, a flat Russian cap such as Lenin wears in photographs, and a belted Russian peasant's blouse. Depending on who comes in and out of the studio this morning, he speaks in Russian, French, or Spanish, equally at home in all. Among the books on shelves at the side of the room are volumes by his father, in many editions, and from time to time as we talk, he goes over and retrieves one to make a point. Vlady was born in revolutionary Petrograd in 1920, was dandled as a baby on Lenin's knee, and for the first twenty-seven years of his life he shared that of his father: hunger, the arrests of family friends, exile in Orenburg and Western Europe, and then the final voyage to Mexico.

Like his father, Vlady has had troubles with the authorities. The Mexican government, long proud of the country's muralists, commissioned him to do four big paintings for the Interior Ministry headquarters. They were unveiled with great public fanfare in 1994. Several months later, they disappeared. Officials had judged one of them to be too sympathetic to the Zapatista peasant rebels in the state of Chiapas.

Vlady remembers well his childhood years in the 1920s and early '30s, as darkness closed over Russia. Two rooms in that Leningrad communal apartment where he grew up were occupied by families of policemen (one possibly including the woman I had met), and "each time Serge went to the telephone, someone opened a door" to listen. Serge told his young son Russian fairy tales at night and took him cross-country skiing on the snow-covered ice of the Neva River. But a normal childhood became increasingly difficult as arrests mounted and the newspapers filled with articles demanding death for people judged traitors to the Revolution. The translation work on which Victor Serge depended for his income dried up. Vlady was twelve when his father was arrested for the second time.

"He telephoned me, from his prosecutor's office. He told me that I

was now the man of the house, that I had to take care of my mother, to study, to brush my teeth, to speak French, to draw.

"Things were very tense at home. I went out one evening, and I passed the building of the GPU [the secret police]. I ran in the door. There were two soldiers with bayonets, and a red carpet on a big staircase.

"'Stop!'"

"There was a door, and a man there, in uniform, who asked, 'What's going on?'

"'You've arrested my father!'

"'Who is he?'

"I remember he had a corner office. He picked up the telephone, talked, and then said, 'Your father is in Moscow.'

"'It's not true!'

"He telephoned Moscow, and then said, 'He's in the Lubyanka [national secret police headquarters].'"

At home, Vlady's maternal grandparents, who were taking care of him, were aghast that he had entered the secret police building. Ten months later the family finally received permission to join Serge in exile in Orenburg. Vlady and his mother sold their books and furniture, and left for the Urals. "We had a particularly hard time with hunger there. People were dropping like flies." But Orenburg was where, with strong encouragement from his father, Vlady really began to draw.

When Vlady speaks of Victor Serge as a human being, what he remembers most warmly is his father's calm, optimism, and equanimity. "He never swore—even though he had been long in prison, with some terrible people." And, wherever they were—at home, in exile, on shipboard—whether there was hope of publication or not, Serge wrote. He and Vlady were stuck in an internment camp for some weeks in Martinique in 1941, trying to get to Mexico at a time when many countries were turning away refugees. Even in the camp, Serge kept writing, prose and poems—Vlady makes the motion of a writer's hand holding a pen and crossing a page—"he worked just as if he were at home."

Have his father's beliefs influenced Vlady's art? One answer lies in

the giant canvas on the end wall of his studio, which Vlady has been painting and repainting for many years, interrupted by public viewing at an exhibition. The painting shows the Persian emperor Xerxes, who invaded Greece in 480 B.C. When a storm destroyed the pontoon bridges he built to cross the Dardanelles, the narrow strait between Asia and Europe, the enraged Xerxes ordered his soldiers to whip the sea in punishment. Xerxes is a Cyclops in Vlady's painting, mounted on a dragon the color of fire; the soldiers whipping the deep green sea are tiny figures, in keeping with the hopelessness of their task. More than half a century after Victor Serge's death, his artist son has gone back two and a half millennia to find an image for one lesson that Serge's own life taught them both, about the folly of an autocrat's grasping for absolute power.

—Adam Hochschild

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

VICTOR Serge, who was born in 1890 and died in 1947, was an anarchist, a Bolshevik, a Trotskyist, a revisionist Marxist, and, on his own confession, a "personalist." Belgian by place of birth and upbringing, French by adoption and in literary expression, Russian by parentage and later by citizenship, he eventually became stateless and was put down as a Spanish national for purposes of his funeral documents. He was a journalist, a poet, a pamphleteer, a historian, an agitator, and a novelist. Usually he was several of these things at once; there were few times in his life when he did not combine at least two or three nationalities, ideologies, and professional callings. Nevertheless, although there is no way of describing him in brief without an inventory of discordances, he was very much an integral man. To read his memoirs is to receive the impression of a strong and consistent personality, of an approach to life and to politics which is complex but unified, of a heart which, however it may be divided, is so because reality tears it asunder, not because its loyalties are confused. When we list the varying political trends that entered into Victor Serge's makeup, we are simply recording his continual sensitivity to certain perennial dilemmas of action. Serge hated violence, but he saw it, at times, as constituting the lesser evil. He believed that necessity in politics might sometimes be frightful, but was necessity nonetheless, only he was not inclined to glorify it into a virtue. He mistrusted the State, but he recognized it as an inevitable form in the progress of society. So general a statement of political predicaments is doubtless banal, but it is in fact rather rare to find a public figure (let alone a revolutionary public figure) who plainly registers both extremes of a dilemma with

equal sensitivity, even though his ultimate choice may incline very definitely towards one pole or the other.

An appreciation of the complexity of political choice probably does not conduce to effective Left-wing theory or leadership. The improvising politician, concerned above all to seek the key to social transformation, has almost of necessity to overemphasize some features of social reality at the expense of others. But the revolutionary of mixed origins and impulsions may well make a very good witness to the great upheavals of his time. Standing at the confluence of several radical traditions, he will be able to judge the programs, actions, and ideas of the competing parties with a certain detachment, and yet his detachment will not be of the uncomprehending, noncommittal kind which would make it impossible to describe the revolution at all, except perhaps as a sequence of despotic acts. Thus it is N. N. Sukhanov, an ex-Social-Revolutionary, ex-Menshevik Bolshevik sympathizer, who is responsible for a brilliant and uniquely valuable history of the revolutionary year of 1917.[1] To the subsequent epoch of the Revolution, its opening and continuing phases of mass violence, terror, and degeneracy, Serge brings a mind already matured in the experience of heroism and its corruption. When he entered the service of the Revolution, at the age of twenty-eight, he had behind him several years of disgust with the commercialized Social-Democracy of Belgium, three years of mounting disillusionment with anarchist terrorism, and five years' unspeakable existence as a convict among convicts. Steeped in the "individualist" psychology of his libertarian past, he retained an intense and wary consciousness of the many-sidedness of human motivation, of man's potential both for titanic endeavor and for regression to the brute.

In the writings of Serge particular political tendencies stand displayed as the expression of moral and psychological resources within the individual. Not Marxism or reformism, Stalinism or liberalism are primary, but will, fear, sensitivity, dishonesty, courage, mental rigidity, psychic dynamism, and their opposites or absences. Serge tells

---

1. N. N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution, 1917: A Personal Record*, edited and abridged by Joel Carmichael (Oxford University Press, 1955).

you that a certain man is an obsessive, or that he leans too much upon favor, and this information is intended to mean quite as much as the facts about his party alignment; indeed, the political characterization is perhaps causally dependent on the more personal one. Serge often manages his evocation of the person by means of physiognomic detail: how this face was puffed (*bouffi*), that one solid-looking (*carré*), how certain eyes were gentle, or harsh, or firm. On his return to Western Europe, in 1936, Serge drew a long train of political conclusions (which stood the test of time considerably better than the more catastrophic expectations of his comrades) from one simple anatomic observation: that the Belgians were now *fat*.

Serge's fascination with the expressive externals of people is of particular use to him in the many thumbnail portraits of revolutionists, writers, and plain folk that fill the pages of the *Memoirs*. As Serge progresses on his various expeditions with the political and the literary vanguard, he leaves behind him a trail of single paragraphs or sparse sentences, each bearing the vivid imprint of a summarized personality: Gramsci, Toller, Lukács, Yesenin, Balabanova, Gide, Trotsky, Vandervelde, Pilnyak, Barbusse—the improbable list could be extended indefinitely, though there would be little point in trying to do so since much of Serge's appeal lies in the most obscure of his characters. While these portrayals are succinct and bold they are not, generally speaking, caricatures, for Serge maintains a scrupulous fairness towards his memories. He can summon up a trio of German Social-Democrats, a clique of Comintern functionaries or a collection of deadbeat *illégalistes*, and project their living presence into the odd paragraph or so with utter sympathy and at the same time with transparent fidelity to his own point of view. There is a passage in his novel *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* in which he shows us Stalin, at the height of the Purges, not as a sadist or a villain but as a hopelessly solitary man, viewed in the white light of compassion. And yet Serge's concern for human beings is by no means the same type of concern that a nonpolitical writer would display, confronted by the same personages. Although Serge's portraits of political characters are rounded, nuanced, and humane, he is all the time seeing and selecting their traits from a specifically revolutionary standpoint; basically he is asking

himself, "Is this man the kind of person who will help to make the revolution? Or will he perhaps help to make the wrong kind of revolution?" Towards the end of the *Memoirs*, and again in his diaries, Serge remarks that one of the greatest problems in politics is that of reconciling intransigence, which he thought indispensable to any worthwhile convictions, with the equally necessary principles of criticism towards ideas and respect towards men. "Intransigence is steadfastness, is *living*... Nietzsche was quite right to consider 'possession of the truth' as allied to the will to dominate." It is Victor Serge's exceptional merit as a revolutionary witness, not only that he conceived of the problem at all, but also that he himself so often resolved it in a mode of perception that fused both intransigence and love.

The forceful independence of Serge's vision of political processes may be traced back to a very early stage in his Bolshevik career. In August 1921 a French Socialist publisher brought out a little book by Serge under the title *Les Anarchistes et l'expérience de la Révolution russe*. In it (as he himself hints on pages 133–34 of the *Memoirs*) we find, sometimes in rudimentary but often in quite developed form, all the basic concepts deployed by Serge in his later analyses of the Red dictatorship and its totalitarian leanings. Fundamental to his critique is a distinction between the avoidable and the unavoidable aspects of degeneration in revolutions. Unlike most other supporters of Bolshevism, he does not idealize the existing regimentation, or deny it for what it is. "The proletarian dictatorship has, in Russia, had to introduce an increasingly authoritarian centralism. One may perhaps deplore it. Unfortunately I do not believe that it could have been avoided." However, the role of necessity must not be invoked as an unrestricted excuse licensing any conceivable measure of despotism: "The rise of a Jacobin Party and its exclusive dictatorship do not then appear to be inevitable, and at this point everything depends on the ideas which inspire the party, on the men who carry out these ideas, and on the reality of control by the masses." What is more, "Every revolutionary government is by its very nature conservative and therefore retrograde. Power exercises upon those who hold it a baleful influence which is often expressed in deplorable occupational perversions (*déformations professionnelles*)." The State, which is an effective "killing-machine" in

the military sense, is less efficient in the regulation of production: "One of the troubles of Red Russia is precisely that she has failed to avoid the almost total Statification of production."

All the greater, therefore, was the responsibility of free-thinking revolutionaries: "It will be the task of libertarian Communists to proclaim by their criticism and activity that the crystallization of the workers' State must be avoided at all costs." The solution to the problem of all-embracing State ownership must be "production to the producers, that is to the trade unions," even though this policy holds the danger that the unions will themselves turn into a new State bureaucracy. Anarchism is vindicated in its proclamation of "the terrible harm residing in authority, the harmfulness of Statism and authoritarian centralism." Indeed, in the very successes of the Revolution "little credit is due to Authority. Many things have been achieved in spite of it"; here Serge seems to prefigure his later emphasis on the economic disadvantages of Stalinism. All the same, anarchists must be "with the Revolution, unhesitating and ubiquitous, or they will be nothing." They will be Communists, but "in contradiction with numerous others they will strive to preserve the spirit of freedom, and so will be gifted with a more critical approach and a sharper awareness of ultimate ends. Within any Communist movement their lucidity will make them the most formidable enemies of the climbers, the budding politicians and commissars, the formalists, pundits and intriguers."

The circumstances surrounding this essay themselves form a striking testimony to Serge's insistence in the *Memoirs* on the comparatively tolerant spirit of which the Bolsheviks were capable. Serge wrote it in Petrograd in the summer of 1920, having already spent over a year at Zinoviev's side in the administrative work of the Communist International. He was living in the principal hotel for Party functionaries, the Astoria, next door to Bakayev and Yevdokimov. *Les Anarchistes et l'expérience de la Révolution russe* was prepared for publication in the June of 1921 and published two months later. The bloody suppression of the Kronstadt mutiny, the outlawing of the Workers' Opposition as an "anarcho-syndicalist deviation" and the banning of Party factions had all taken place earlier in the year. Nevertheless, the publication of Serge's anti-Statist, semi-anarchist and pro-syndicalist

booklet seems to have made no difference to his position in the Party. This was not Serge's only indiscretion in that year, as chapter 4 of the *Memoirs* shows. Yet, after it all, he could still be entrusted with an important confidential mission in the Comintern network abroad, performing conspiratorial duties in preparation of the apparently imminent German revolution. Serge does not seem to have regarded this mission as constituting some kind of demotion or banishment. The fraternal climate within Bolshevism was still such that a deviationist could be trusted.

It is this continuous record of fundamental unorthodoxy that makes Victor Serge's record so different from most other ex-Communist autobiographies. Through his personal tenacity and his intellectual pluralism Serge could mentally balance the various risks of political action, hedging, as it were, expectations which for others were staked upon a fanatic's throw of all or none, and so insuring himself against the chances both of blind commitment and of stark disillusion. Harking back to the turbulent and frightful years of his youth, he could remark simply *Je ne regrette rien pour moi*, and there is the same absence of personal remorse when he recounts his Bolshevik career. The vividness and immediacy of Serge's recollections do not strike us as being artificially tinted by hindsight; and in fact the judgments he passes on Russian events are very often repeated identically in writings separated by decades, quoted back and forth with a touch of clairvoyant's vanity.

Over the last twenty-five years or so considerable controversy has waxed over the question: Is Stalinism the logical, organic, and inevitable continuation of Bolshevism? Most Western observers have replied with a simple affirmative, and an equation of similar form, but with the signs of all quantities reversed from negative to positive, was propounded until quite recently by political algebraists within the Soviet sphere of influence. On the other hand, the Trotskyist school of Marxism has long insisted that Stalinism is the "direct negation" of Bolshevism, while official Soviet theory after 1956 has increasingly tended to posit much the same kind of polar opposition between "Leninist norms" and at least some of the "excesses, abuses, and crimes" of Stalin's day. Victor Serge's answer to the problem was persistently double-sided. As against Trotsky and his followers he stresses the fatal

rigidities and ambiguities of Leninist and Marxist doctrine, and the sources of degeneracy in such early Soviet institutions as the Cheka. As against the pairing of Bolshevism with Stalinism, he simply describes what, in his experience, Bolsheviks and Stalinists were like, and details the severe limitations set upon a free development of Soviet Socialism by the Civil War and its aftermath of havoc. Serge was suspicious of any notion tending to establish historical fatalism, and this set him both against the easy appeal to necessity which Leninists and Stalinists employed in their apologias of butchery, and against the common Western habit of regarding the degenerescence of revolutions into tyranny as virtually the only Iron Law which it is still permissible to detect within history. One locus in Serge's polemical writings is particularly worth citing in this respect.[2] In 1938 and 1939 Trotskyist and libertarian circles were hotly involved in debating the nature of the Kronstadt rising of 1921, whose ruthless liquidation by the Bolsheviks lent itself to obvious comparison with the ongoing Great Purge. Serge entered into combat both with Trotsky, who had no qualms at all about the Bolshevik treatment of the mutineers, and with a Yugoslav ex-Trotskyist, Anton Ciliga, who saw the Kronstadt rising as a proletarian revolution against the bureaucracy, and its suppression as a proof of the linear descent of Stalin's Party from Lenin's. Trotsky had brusquely dismissed Serge's earlier reminiscences of the Kronstadt massacres: "Whether there were any needless victims I do not know. On this score I trust Dzerzhinsky more than his belated critics . . . Victor Serge's conclusions on this score—from third hand—have no value in my eyes." Serge retorted that his information on Kronstadt came from anarchist eyewitnesses he had interviewed in prison immediately after the rising; whereas Dzerzhinsky's conclusions were "from seventh or ninth hand," the head of the Cheka having been absent from Petrograd at the time. "The single fact that a Trotsky did not know what all the rank-and-file Communists knew—that out of inhumanity a needless crime had been committed against the proletariat and peasantry—this fact, I repeat, is deeply significant."

2. *New International* (February 1939): 53–54.

On the other hand, Serge maintained against Ciliga that the socio-political composition of the non-Party masses at the time of Kronstadt was very far from progressive. "In 1921, everybody who aspires to Socialism is inside the Party... It is the non-Party workers of this epoch, joining the Party to the number of two million in 1924, upon the death of Lenin, who assure the victory of its bureaucracy." The conscious revolutionaries in the leadership of the mutiny "constituted an undeniable elite and, duped by their own passion, they opened in spite of themselves the door to a frightful counterrevolution." Serge's comment on the general issue in question, could well be taken as a summing-up of his lifelong attitude to the Revolution: "It is often said that 'the germ of all Stalinism was in Bolshevism at its beginning.' Well, I have no objection. Only, Bolshevism also contained many other germs—a mass of other germs—and those who lived through the enthusiasm of the first years of the first victorious revolution ought not to forget it. To judge the living man by the death germs which the autopsy reveals in a corpse—and which he may have carried in him since his birth—is this very sensible?"

In one sense the political career of Victor Serge terminated with the demise of the European Left after the fall of France in 1940.[3] He was never again able to participate in any social movement with a recognizable influence upon public events. The last six or seven years of his life passed in virtual political solitude; his refugee status forbade any intervention by him in Mexican affairs, and he could find no wider international audience to hear him out. Nonetheless, Serge never at any stage retired from his vocation as a revolutionary writer. He went on writing his fine novel on the Purges during the rout of France, in the fugitives' warren of Marseilles, and on the troubled voyage that took him to his final asylum. Once in Mexico, he wrote without respite: novels, essays, poems, articles, biography and autobiography. Anxious to keep abreast of the major social and cultural de-

3. Except where otherwise stated, the material for the following outline of Serge's last years is drawn from Julián Gorkín's invaluable appendix to the 1957 edition of the *Memoirs*, from Serge's published notebooks, or from the issue of the review *Témoins* containing his letters to Antoine Borie.

velopments of the time, he devoured every significant book, periodical or journal that he chanced on, in Russian, French, Spanish, German, or English. He kept a voluminous diary, amassed material on Mexican history and culture, and sent off long political letters to his circle of friends abroad, as well as to any prominent foreign publicists that he felt like criticizing. The lengthy studies he undertook as *rapporteur* to a small Socialist exile group, destined for the eyes of a mere handful, are composed with the same measure and density as the works he intended for publication. All these millions of words were typed by Serge in cramped single-spacing on reams of the cheapest flimsy, with rarely an erasure or amendment. When one manuscript was finished he went straight on to the next without looking back. Reading over the text of the *Memoirs*, his friend Julián Gorkín remarked that the book was "condensed and excessively laconic, through the adoption of this telegraphic style"; surely material so rich should be developed and expanded? Serge gave a skeptical smile, and answered, "What would be the use? Who would publish me? And besides, I am pressed for time. Other books are waiting." He worked on, sometimes with a haunting sense that his faculties might be weakening through the sheer vacuity that surrounded him. "Terribly difficult," he notes, "to create in the void, lacking the least support, the least real environment." He speaks of "writing for the desk-drawer alone, past the age of fifty, unable to exclude the hypothesis that the tyrannies will outlast the remainder of my life"; and "I am beginning to wonder if my very name will not be an obstacle to the novel's publication."

This oppressive sense of failure was not without its foundation in recent experience. As soon as Serge arrived in Mexico he paid the familiar penalty for his clairvoyance. His book on the Nazi aggression against Russia (*Hitler contra Stalin*) proved to be too frank for the public taste, since it predicted disastrous Soviet reverses in the early stages of the war, with the peasants actually welcoming Hitler's invaders. As a result, the small firm that had published the book expired in ruin. Serge's dark forecasts turned out of course to be perfectly accurate. Public meetings addressed by Serge, Gorkín, and others from their circle were brutally assailed by Communist groups, on one occasion by an armed gang of two hundred men. Several times he and his

friends had to go into hiding. At his lodgings, which he seldom left if he could help it, he had a spy hole cut into the front door so that he could identify callers before opening to them. The danger was not always so bluntly physical. A protracted barrage of slander was directed against Serge and his circle by the many organs of the Mexican press influenced by the Communists and their powerful associates (such as the trade union leader Lombardo Toledano). The strong German Stalinist emigration (*Freies Deutschland*), including such veteran propagandists as André Simone (Katz) and Paul Merker, added their quota of venom to the campaign. Serge's friends were Socialist militants of long standing like Marceau Pivert, the leader of the pre-war French Socialist Left; Gustav Regler, lately a political commissar with the International Brigades in Spain; Julián Gorkín, the former international secretary of the independent Marxist party POUM; and other Spanish comrades of that complexion. Nevertheless, they (and Serge and Gorkín particularly) were incessantly denounced as Nazi agents, enemies of the United Nations, allies of the *sinarquistas* or local Fascists, founders of a new Trotskyist International, and fomenters of railway strikes. One by one, Mexican publications closed their columns to this obscure band of troublesome foreigners. The editor of one weekly, which still admitted Gorkín as its foreign editor, and Serge as a contributor, was called in to see Miguel Aleman, the Minister of the Interior and future president of the Republic; there he was informed that the Soviet and British ambassadors were pressing the Mexican government to withdraw from Serge and Gorkín all public means of expression. Although the editor refused to accede, his journal afterwards acquired a new management enjoying the favor of the Soviet embassy, and he, Gorkín, and Serge were all unceremoniously ousted. The boycott was now total, and Serge found it increasingly hard to keep body and soul together. Only one more book of his saw print during his life, a novel published in Canada and (in translation) in the United States. He tried in vain to get the *Memoirs* published in the USA. "In every publishing house," he bitterly concluded, "there is at least one conservative and two Stalinists, and nobody has the slightest understanding of the life of a European militant." He died

penniless, and his friends had to make a collection among themselves to pay the expenses of his burial.

The estrangements and dissensions typical of émigré political groups bore particularly heavily upon Serge. Within the independent Socialist colony he was the only member with a specifically Bolshevik background. His collaboration with Socialists from other traditions was warm and unstinted, but we can gain some inkling of a certain isolation that he felt, to judge from a note he entered in his diary in mid-January 1944. Here he records his pleasure at the resumption of friendly relations with Trotsky's widow Natalya, noting how they, "the sole survivors of the Russian Revolution here and perhaps anywhere in the world, used to be separated so completely by sectarianism; and this was not like the human spirit of the real Bolsheviks." He reflects that Natalya is going to be pained by certain anti-Trotskyist observations in a book which he had just brought out in co-authorship with his friends: "She will perhaps not realize my solitude in these collaborations." He concludes sadly, "There is nobody left who knows what the Russian Revolution was really like, what the Bolsheviks were really like—and men judge without knowing, with bitterness and basic rigidity."

Yet in other respects Serge was far too much of a revisionist for his more traditional Marxist comrades, many of whom were nursing hopes for their postwar return to the Old World on the crest of a European Revolution. Serge had no such hopes. For him the Second World War was a "war of social transformation" (and not simply a classical imperialist war as nearly all his comrades thought), ushering in an era of controlled and planned economies that would, under the conditions of postwar reconstruction, burst the fetters of capitalist private property even in the absence of proletarian upheavals. "European big capital, weakened and discredited by the war it has brought on, will find itself in *opposition* to the growth of production and the common good, *now in clear evidence*."[4] Serge believed that this inevitable

4. "Economie Dirigée et Démocratie" (n.d.), Serge Archive, Yale University Libraries.

collectivist transformation would have a marked totalitarian bias, which could, however, be largely counteracted by class struggle on the political level. Parliaments, municipalities, trade unions, and workers' councils offered a possible focus for this countervailing influence by the masses. Serge maintained this perspective well after the war: "I wonder if some kind of collectivism, quasi-totalitarian but *enlightened*, guaranteeing the human rights that have been acquired over several centuries, will not eventually establish itself for the reconstruction of the old continent; such a system I would find acceptable if it were directed by technicians and effectively controlled by the masses."[5]

So pessimistic an outlook, based (despite its undoubted insights) upon speculative impressionism rather than on any thorough economic analysis, could not fail to irritate most of his comrades. Their charges of "technocratism" ("Just one more little 'deviation' in my life-history," as he remarked) irked him, and he in his turn could not take seriously their pipe dreams for an insurrectionary postwar settlement in Europe. There was no basis for the growth of mass revolutionary parties in the conditions of Occupied Europe, and in any case nowadays "a popular revolution which possesses no airplanes will inevitably be beaten." There could be no question any longer of a specifically proletarian hegemony; the "vanguard" must be sought preponderantly within the growing social strata of technicians and white-collar employees. "The education of the working class has to be managed afresh."

Serge's reflections on the Western social order are suggestive but often highly ambiguous. He was on surer ground as a commentator upon Soviet perspectives, which he indeed saw as determining the direction of all politics, and especially Socialist politics, in the rest of Europe. He shared none of the current illusions that the Grand Alliance of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin would survive the end of hostilities with Germany. As early as January 1944 we find him noting that "Stalinist hegemony over Europe would not be a liberation but—a new nightmare" and that "it would also mark the beginning of the Third World War." Serge's last years were increasingly clouded by this prospect of "the permanent war" (as he terms it in a diary entry for October

5. *Témoins*, letter to Borie, 26 September 1947.

1944), anticipated by him at a time when Western politicians often displayed the most grotesque naïveté over Stalin's intentions. Rarely can his sense of "the appalling powerlessness of accurate prediction" have afflicted him so acutely as when he watched the unfolding of the promised nightmare: Stalinist subjugation of Eastern Europe, extremist demands for preventive nuclear war on the Western side. The letters and notebooks of this period reflect the division of his fears between the threat of Stalinism and the threat of war. It would be possible to excerpt fragments of these sources in such a way as to present either a pro-Western Victor Serge or a kind of "New Left" archetype, repelling both capitalism and Communism with a libertarian disgust. The truth must be that within a man of Serge's loyalties the Cold War engendered contradictions, which he could only express, never surmount.

Serge was convinced that the sources of Soviet expansionism lay in the extreme inner weakness of the social organism underneath the totalitarian armor. In an unpublished essay written in English he observes: "The training of a popular revolution who [*sic*] has survived against the worst odds has formed in the governmental circles a mentality of offensive bluff and courageous risk, daily expediency, belief only in force and fact. In the greatest danger the regime will not think of retreat, evolution, compromise, but of an offensive struggle in which compromises are expediency, more apparent than real." In Serge's view the postwar era might evolve along any of three possible directions. If the Soviet system yielded neither to internal nor external pressure, there would be war. Alternatively the regime might back down in the international field while refusing any concessions at home: "War is then postponed, but not removed altogether." Or again, "under the combined pressure of the masses at home and of the international conflicts which will arise in various ways, the regime may try and evolve towards a democratization. Upon the slightest relaxation of terrorist totalitarianism, immense possibilities are opened out, which may cause the emergence in Russia of a Socialist-inclined or Socialist democracy, and permit a peaceful collaboration with the world outside. The nightmare of war is then removed."[6]

6. Unpublished MS., On the Russian Problem (October 1945). Serge Archive, Yale University Libraries.

It was in fact this last possibility that aroused Serge's closest interest. His papers and letters refer repeatedly to the idea of something quite odd and unforeseen happening in Russia, which would transform the situation most favorably for its people and for the world outside. Serge is deliberately vague as to what this change might consist of. It is certainly not an anti-Stalinist revolution of the kind advocated by Trotsky. He calls the prospect one of "internal crisis,"[7] "change of regime in Russia,"[8] or of a "great Soviet reform."[9] One illuminating episode of March 1944, recorded subsequently in his diary, indicates the strength of Serge's conviction on this score. He had met Trotsky's grandson, Siova Volkov, on a bus. Siova was about seventeen years old at this time, and was understandably bitter about things Russian. In the course of his childhood his mother had been driven to suicide in Berlin and his father had disappeared forever in Russia. Having taken refuge with his grandfather in Mexico, the boy had had to crouch beneath a bed, wounded in the foot, amidst a hail of machine-gun bullets directed throughout the house by the artist Siqueiros; he had lived in the same house in the time when Trotsky was murdered by an agent who had ingratiated himself with the whole family. Siova now told Serge that he had completely forgotten the Russian language. "You'll have to learn it, then," said Serge. "What for?" Siova replied violently. "Out of sentimental attachment? No, thank you!" And Serge answered, "Russia will be changing a great deal, before very long. We must remain faithful to her, and keep up great hopes."

This long-term optimism of Serge, which now seems uncannily prescient, arose from the same source as his dark immediate forebodings: from his certain belief, based on long personal experience in Russia, that the terrorist edifice of Stalinism was founded on unendurable social strains, which had been accentuated even further by the ruin of the Second World War. He probably, too, still believed that what he called "the moral capital of the Socialist revolution" had still not been exhausted even by the long years of blood and lies. Serge had been one

7. Untitled manuscript (n.d.), Serge Archive, Yale University Libraries.
8. Ibid., April 16, 1947.
9. "On the Russian Problem."

of the first people (before anybody else, he thought) to use the word "totalitarian" of the Soviet State, but unlike some Western thinkers he did not mean it to imply a finished, impervious, and stable structure, governed omnipotently at the top by considerations of pure power. The detail of his prediction, where there was detail at all, might be fanciful; a few days before he died, he told his son Vlady, "I won't live to see this but you probably will—monuments to Trotsky and to Stalin in the public squares of Russian cities."[10] There is no reason to suppose that he would have regarded the Russian regime of 1963 as the "Socialist-inclined or Socialist democracy" of his hopes. Nevertheless, in broad outline and to an astonishing degree, Serge's sense of Soviet reality, of its double-sidedness for the future as well as for the past, has been justified by the turn that events have in fact taken.

To say this much is not to elevate Serge into an expert oracle, a sort of Nostradamus of twentieth-century revolutionism. Because his background and experience were so intensively Russian, he is sometimes a much less valuable guide to certain areas of politics outside the frontiers of the Soviet Union itself. His references to colonial nationalist movements, in the *Memoirs* as elsewhere, are nearly always distant or disparaging. Later in life he tended to regard all non-Russian Communist Parties (of whom he had never held a very high opinion) as little more than extensions of the Kremlin and NKVD apparatus. When, in late 1944, he encountered the suggestion that Communist-led resistance movements might develop an autonomous character, free of Muscovite control, his response was wholeheartedly scornful: there were only "totalitarian-Communist *condottieri* of the Mao Tse-Tung or Tito type, cynical and *convinced*, who will be 'revolutionary' or 'counterrevolutionary'—or both simultaneously—depending on the orders they receive, and capable of an about-face from one day to the next."[11] It would of course be senseless to reproach Serge for not foreseeing the Yugoslav and Chinese schisms of Communism; but enough has been said to suggest that his clairvoyance was principally

10. Information supplied by Vladimir Serge.

11. Serge, *Carnets* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1986), 172–73; see also Serge's letter "Stalinism and the Resistance," *Politics* (February 1945).

that of an exceptionally sensitive eyewitness and participant of the Bolshevik movement.

About Victor Serge's death, as in his life, there was a retiring quality. He had been in poor health over a number of years, with a record of heart attacks going back to his convict years in France. The high altitude of Mexico City did not suit his condition, and even his long, lyrical excursions into country parts could offer small convalescence after the years of deprivation and persecution. In the middle of 1947 he suffered two attacks of angina. He looked frightfully old and tired, but was optimistic and full of plans. There were hopes of publication (for *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*) from Canada, France, and the USA., of collaboration with Mexican reviews, even of a possible visa for the United States. Early in the small hours of Monday, 17 November, he read his wife a poem he had just written. It was a meditation on a Renaissance terra-cotta of a pair of hands, old and with knotted veins. Serge had tears in his eyes as he read the poem out: the hands symbolized generations of human suffering and resistance, and the knots on them were so like those of his own veins.

> What astonishing contact, old man, your hands establish
> with our own!
> How vain the centuries of death before your hands...
> The artist, nameless like you, surprised them in the act of grasping
> —who knows if the gesture still vibrates or has just ended?[12]

He went to bed after typing the poem, and had his breakfast around ten the next morning, discussing anthropology with his wife, something about the mystical significance of gold. She had to go to work then; there is no record of the rest of Serge's day until eight in the evening, when he went out to see his son Vlady. He wanted to have a talk about Vlady's paintings, but his son was not at home. He met his friend Julián Gorkín in the street; they talked for a while, and shook hands when they parted. This would be around 10:00 p.m. Not

12. Serge, *Resistance: Poems*, translated by James Brook (San Francisco: City Lights, 1972).

long after that, doubtless feeling himself ill, Serge hailed a taxi, sank back into the seat, and died without telling the driver where to take him. His family found him stretched out on an old operating table in a dirty room inside a police station. Gorkín recounts what he looked like: his upturned soles had holes in them, his suit was threadbare, his shirt coarse. Really he might have been some vagabond or other picked up from the streets. Victor Serge's face was stiffened in an expression of ironic protest and, by means of a bandage of cloth; the State had at last closed his mouth.

—Peter Sedgwick
Liverpool, January 1963

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

THIS IS the first complete, unexpurgated edition of Victor Serge's classic *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* to be published in English, and thereby hangs a tale.

Translating Serge has ever been a labor of love (and of political commitment), and this was especially true for Peter Sedgwick, who undertook to translate into English the *Memoirs* in the early 1960s when Serge was an all-but-forgotten figure. Sedgwick (1934–1983) was an English psychologist (and later politics lecturer), the author of highly original works on politics and psychology, and well known for his vast erudition, pungent wit, and personal modesty (see www.petersedgwick.org/). Sedgwick had a difficult childhood during World War II, became a Christian Socialist as a youth, then a member of the Communist Party until the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Leaving the Communist Party, Peter was a founding member of what became the New Left in Britain—first within the Socialist Review Group, then the International Socialism Group. After graduating from Oxford, where he had been a scholarship student at Balliol College, he began translating the *Memoirs* for Oxford University Press in whatever spare time he had left over from raising two young children while eking out an uncomfortable living as a tutor organizer in Her Majesty's prison at Grendon Underwood, where I first met him.[1] It took Sedgwick years to complete this heroic project, to which he brought scrupulous fidelity to Serge's French, a vast (and indispensable) knowledge of revolutionary history and politics, a wry sense of humor, and a vigorous English style that well-suited Serge's passionate laconism. So

1. Many thanks to Paul and Michèle Sedgwick for donating the royalties of their father's translation toward an Arabic translation of *Memoirs*.

I was shocked when Peter informed me in 1963 that Oxford University Press had told him that as a condition of publication his translation had to be shortened by one-eighth—an economy measure! So with heavy heart, he expurgated his translation, making nearly two hundred separate cuts so as to preserve as much as possible the coherence of Serge's dense, highly compressed narrative.

Today, thanks to a Greek Socialist and Serge fan, we have an integral version of Serge's original text. In 2007, George Paizis (former senior lecturer in the Department of French at University College London and a longstanding member of the Socialist Workers Party) volunteered to go painstakingly through the French and English texts, identify the deleted sections, and translate them anew. Hence this first unexpurgated edition, which includes Peter Sedgwick's seminal translator's introduction, Adam Hochschild's eloquent post-Soviet foreword, and a glossary of revolutionaries and institutions mentioned by Serge (first occurrence indicated by an asterisk).

French novelist François Maspero, whose leftist publishing house revived Serge's books (all but forgotten in postwar France) in the rebellious 1960s, recently remarked: "There exists a sort of secret international, perpetuating itself from one generation to the next, of admirers who read, reread [Serge's] books and know a lot about him."[2] As Adam Hochschild notes in his foreword, "It is rare when a writer inspires instant brotherhood among strangers." In today's post-Soviet world, concludes Maspero, "Serge's work remains that of a witness to his century, indispensable to anyone who does not wish to die an idiot, after consuming an overdose of those politically correct rereadings of History with which we have been singularly bombarded recently."

On behalf of all of Serge's translators, it is a keen pleasure (and revolutionary duty) to welcome you into the "English-language section" of this invisible international.

—Richard Greeman

3. François Maspero, "Victor Serge, poète de la flamme," *Le Monde*, (25 December 1998).

MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONARY

The author (c. 1939)

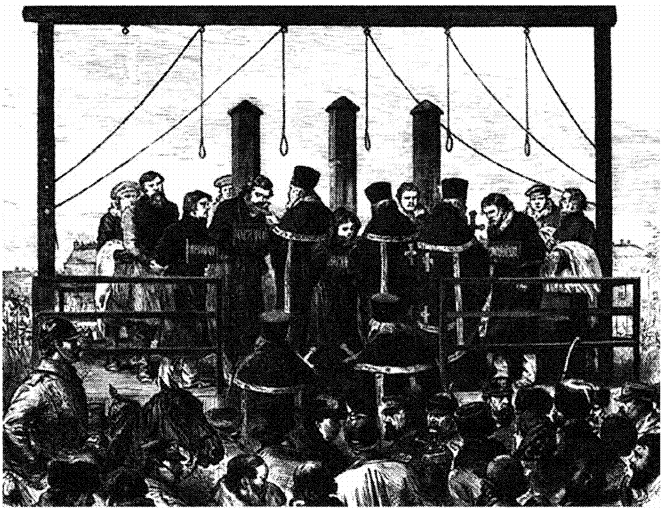
1.
WORLD WITHOUT POSSIBLE ESCAPE
1906–1912

EVEN BEFORE I emerged from childhood, I seem to have experienced, deeply at heart, that paradoxical feeling which was to dominate me all through the first part of my life: that of living in a world without any possible escape, in which there was nothing for it but to fight for an impossible escape. I felt repugnance, mingled with wrath and indignation, towards people whom I saw settled comfortably in this world. How could they not be conscious of their captivity, of their unrighteousness? All this was a result, as I can see today, of my upbringing as the son of revolutionary exiles, tossed into the great cities of the West by the first political hurricanes blowing over Russia.

On 1 March 1881, nine years before my birth, on a day of shining snow, a fair-haired young woman, her face calm and determined, who was waiting near a St. Petersburg canal for the passing of a sledge escorted by Cossacks, suddenly waved a handkerchief. There was an echo of muffled, soft explosions, the sledge came to a sudden halt, and there on the snow, huddled against the canal wall, lay a man with graying side-whiskers, whose legs and belly had been blown to shreds: the Tsar Alexander II. The party called Peoples' Will* published his death sentence on the following day. My father [Leonid Ivanovich Kibalchich*], a noncommissioned officer in the cavalry of the Imperial Guard, was at that time stationed in the capital; he sympathized with this underground party, which demanded "bread and liberty" for the people of Russia, and had no more than about sixty members and two or three hundred sympathizers. Among those responsible for the assassination, Nikolai Kibalchich,* a chemist and distant relative of my father, was arrested and hanged, together with Zhelyabov, Ryssakov, Mikhailov, and Sophia Perovskaya, daughter of a former Governor of

St. Petersburg. In court, four of the five condemned to death defended their libertarian demands with dignity and courage; on the scaffold, they embraced one another and died calmly.

My father had joined in the struggle, joining a revolutionary military group in the south of Russia which was soon completely broken;



"On the walls of our humble and makeshift lodgings there were always the portraits of men who had been hanged."

for several days he hid in the gardens of the oldest monastery in Russia, St. Lavra of Kiev; he crossed the Austrian frontier by swimming under the bullets of the police; and he went to Geneva to start a new life, in a land of sanctuary.

He intended to become a physician, but geology, chemistry, sociology, and philosophy also interested him passionately. I never knew him as anything but a man possessed with an insatiable thirst for knowledge and understanding, which was to handicap him during all his remaining years in "the struggle for life." Along with the rest of his revolutionary generation, whose masters were Alexander Herzen, Belinsky, and Chernyshevsky (then a deportee in Yakutia), and also in reaction to his religious education, he became an agnostic, after Herbert Spencer, whom he heard speak in London.

My grandfather on my father's side, a Montenegrin by origin, was

a priest in a small town in the Chernigov province; all I knew of him was a yellowing daguerreotype of a thin, bearded cleric with a high forehead and a kindly expression, in a garden full of bonny, barefooted children. My mother [Vera Poderevskaya-Frolova*], born of Polish gentry, had fled from the bourgeois life of St. Petersburg, and she too went to study in Geneva. I was born in Brussels, as it happened, in mid-journey across the world, because my parents, in quest of their daily bread and of good libraries, were commuting between London (the British Museum), Paris, Switzerland, and Belgium. On the walls of our humble and makeshift lodgings there were always the portraits of men who had been hanged. The conversations of grown-ups dealt with trials, executions, escapes, and Siberian highways, with great ideas incessantly argued over, and with the latest books about these ideas. In my childhood memory I accumulated images of the world: Canterbury Cathedral, the esplanade of old Dover Castle above the sea, the dismal red-brick street in Whitechapel, the hills of Liège. I learned to read through cheap editions of Shakespeare and Chekhov, and, dozing off to sleep, I dreamt for hours of blind King Lear supported, in his journey over the cruel wasteland, by the tenderness of Cordelia. I also acquired bitter experience of that unwritten commandment: "Thou shalt be hungry." I think that if anyone had asked me at the age of twelve, "What is life?" (and I often asked it of myself), I would have replied, "I do not know, but I can see that it means '*Thou shalt think, thou shalt struggle, thou shalt be hungry.*'"

It must have been some time between the age of six and eight that I became the Evildoer. Through this episode I was to learn another commandment: *Thou shalt fight back.* I was a well-loved child, the first-born, but for some years I became, inexplicably, a delinquent child. With a devilish cunning, the criminal child worked his mischief as if he wanted to avenge himself against the universe and, most cruelly of all, against those he loved. The precious pages of my father's scientific notes were found torn up. The milk, stored for supper in the cool of the window ledge, was found dosed with salt. My mother's clothes were mysteriously burnt with matches or else slashed with scissors. Ink was surreptitiously spilt on newly ironed linen. Objects disappeared without trace. Nobody could intercept the hands of the criminal

child—my hands. I was harangued at length, I was admonished, I often saw my mother's eyes fill with tears; I was beaten too, and punished in a hundred ways, because my petty crimes were mad, exasperating, incomprehensible. I drank the salted milk, I denied everything (naturally), I melted into wretched promises, and then went to bed, in inconsolable grief, thinking of King Lear leaning on Cordelia. I became taciturn and introverted. Now and then the crimes would stop, and life would become bright, until the coming of another dark day, which I had learnt to expect with a vigilant inner certainty. Eventually a time came when I acquired a sure foreknowledge of evil: I knew and felt, inwardly, that my mother's pinafore would be dirtied or slit with scissors. I waited upon chastisement, and lived amid rebuke and yet I used to play and climb trees as if evil had never existed. I had entered an unfathomable mystery, I had become wise; I carried the problem inside my head and let its solution ripen. The end of this episode, which I am sure made a deep impression on my character, left me with the most exalting memory of tenderness that I have ever experienced. I was about to learn that two individuals could, with a deep gaze and an embrace, understand one another utterly and conquer the worst evil. We were living on the outskirts of Verviers, in Belgium, in a country house with a big garden. Two days before, some gross misdeed, whose precise nature I no longer remember, had cast a shadow over the household. However, I spent that particular day in the garden with my little brother Raoul.* As twilight appeared, my mother called us back into the big kitchen, where a delicious smell of warm bread hovered in the air. First she busied herself with my brother, washing him, feeding him, and putting him to bed. Then she made the wicked child sit on a chair, knelt before him, and washed his feet. We were alone, lapped in an unforgettable sweetness. My mother looked straight up at me and suddenly, in a tone of reproach, asked, "But why do you do all this, my poor little man?" and then the truth flashed out between us, because a strange power was

Serge's mother, Vera Mikhailovna Poderevskaya

bursting within me: "But it isn't me," I said. "It's Sylvie! I know everything, everything!"

Sylvie was an older adolescent cousin adopted by my parents and living with us, a blonde and graceful girl, but cold-eyed. I had accumulated so many observations and proofs, and with such analytic power, that my headstrong, tearful exposition was irrefutable. The matter was closed, with a full and permanent recovery of trust. I had fought back steadfastly against evil, and had been delivered from it.[1]

My first great experience of hunger dates from a little later, at the age of eleven. I recalled how one day in England we fed on grains of wheat prised out of the ears that my father had picked up from the side of a field; but that was nothing. We spent a hard winter at Liège, in a mining district. Below our lodging a café proprietor used to work: *Mussels and Chips!* Exotic odors... He gave us a little credit, but not enough, for my brother and I were never satisfied. His son would steal sugar to trade with us for bits of string, Russian postage stamps, and various odd and ends. I became accustomed to finding exquisite delicacy in the bread we soaked in black coffee (which was well-sugared, thanks to this trade), and it was evidently good enough for me to survive on. My brother, two years my junior—eight and a half at that time—did not take to this diet, and grew thin, pale, and depressed; I saw him wasting away. "If you don't eat," I told him, "you're going to die"—but I had no idea what it was to die, and he even less, so it did not frighten us.

The fortunes of my father, who had been appointed to the Institute of Anatomy of the University of Brussels, took a sudden turn for the better. He summoned us to his side, and we ate sumptuously. Too late though for Raoul, who was confined to bed, sinking fast but fought back for a few weeks. I put ice on his forehead, I told him stories, I tried to convince him that he would get better, I tried to convince myself; and I saw something incredible happening within him: his face became that of a little child again, his eyes glittered and grew dim at the same time, and all the while the doctors and my father came into the dark room on tiptoe. Alone together, my father and I

1. Serge black-penciled out this whole revealing passage and wrote "*Réserve*" in the margin of the manuscript.

took him to the cemetery at Uccle, on a summer's day. I discovered how alone we were in this seemingly happy town—and how alone I was myself. My father, believing only in science, had given me no religious instruction. Through books, I came across the word "soul"; it was a revelation to me. That lifeless body that had been bundled away in a coffin could not be everything.

Some verses of Sully Prudhomme that I learned by heart gave me a kind of certainty, which I dared not confide to anyone:

Blue eyes, dark eyes, loved and lovely,
Exposed to endless dawn,
From beyond the tomb still see
Tight though their lids be drawn.

In front of our lodging there was a house topped with a finely wrought gable, which I found a magnificent sight. Golden clouds used to rest over it every evening. I called it "Raoul's House," and often paused to gaze at this house in the sky. I detested the lingering hunger of the poor children. In the eyes of those I met, I thought I saw Raoul's look. They were closer to me than anybody else, they were my brothers, and I felt that they were condemned. These feelings were rooted deeply, and have remained with me. After forty years, when I returned to Brussels, I went to see that gable in the sky on the road to Charleroi; and throughout the rest of my life it has been my fate always to find, in the undernourished urchins of the squares of Paris, Berlin, and Moscow, the same condemned faces.

It was a great surprise to me that pain can fade and that we can go on living. Survival is the most disconcerting thing of all; I still think so—for quite different reasons. Why survive if it is not for those who do not? This confused idea justified my good luck and my tenacity, giving them a meaning—and for quite other reasons I feel, even today, linked to and justified by many of those whom I have survived. The dead are very close to the living, and I do not see them separated by some frontier. Later, much later, I was to revisit these thoughts again and again in prisons, in the course of wars, living amid the shades of those who had been shot, without those murky inward certainties of

childhood, barely expressible in clear language, being significantly modified within me.

My first friendship dates from the following year. Wearing a Russian smock in white and mauve check, which my mother had just finished, I was going home along a country street in Ixelles carrying a red cabbage—proud of my smock and feeling a little ridiculous on account of the cabbage. An urchin of my own age, thickset and bespectacled, squinted at me sarcastically from across the road. I deposited my cabbage in a doorway and walked up to him, meaning to pick a quarrel with him by calling him bat-eyed. "Glass-face! Goggles! Want me to push your face in?" We measured each other up like the small gamecocks that we were, jostling one another's shoulders a little. "Just you dare!" "You start!"—all without fighting, however, but forming from then on a friendship which was, through all its enthusiasms and tragedies, never far from conflict. And when he died on the scaffold at the age of twenty, we were still friends—and foes. It was he who, after the squabble, came and asked me if I wanted to play with him, and thus established a dependence on me against which, despite our affection, he ever afterwards rebelled in his inmost heart. Raymond Callemin* grew up as much as he could in the street, anything to get away from the stifling back room that was his home, behind a cobbler's stall where his father patched the shoes of the locals from morning till night. His father was a decent but broken drunk, an old Socialist disgusted with Socialism. From the age of thirteen I lived alone, owing to the journeys and estrangements of my parents; Raymond often came to seek refuge with me. Together we learnt to forsake the tales of Fenimore Cooper for Louis Blanc's great *History of the French Revolution*, whose illustrations showed us streets, just like those that we haunted, overrun by *sans-culottes* armed with pikes. Our favorite pastime was to share two sous' worth of chocolate between us, reading these gripping stories. They moved me particularly because their legends of the past lent substance to the ideals of men I had known of since the first awakenings of my intelligence. Together, though much later, we were to discover Zola's overwhelming novel *Paris* and, in an effort to relive the despair and rage of Salvat,* tracked down to the

Bois de Boulogne after his essay in murder, we wandered for hours through the Bois de la Cambre in the autumn rain.

Our favorite place became the rooftops of the Brussels Palace of Justice. We used to slip up by obscure staircases and, filled with joyful contempt, pass courtrooms, mazes of empty and dusty corridors till we emerged in the open air and the light, into a world of iron, zinc, and stone geometrically ordered in dangerous slopes. From there we had a view of the whole city and the boundless sky. Down below in the square the paving stones formed a mosaic of tiny rectangles where a Lilliputian carriage would be bringing a lawyer brimming with self-importance, bearing a tiny briefcase stuffed with papers that signified laws and offenses. We would burst out laughing, "Ha! What misery! What wretchedness! What an existence! Just think of it! He'll be coming here every day of his life and it will never, ever cross his mind to climb up to the roofs to take a deep breath of air! He knows all the 'No entry' signs, he knows them by heart, he revels in them, it's what he makes his living from." But what moved us most and gave us the clearest lessons was the architecture of the city itself. The massive Palace of Justice that we likened to an Assyrian edifice is built just above the impoverished neighborhoods in the center of town, which it arrogantly dominates with its mass of carved blocks of stone. Two cities: the upper city, built in the image of the Palace, smart, spacious, with its beautiful town houses along the Avenue Louise, and down below La Marolle, a jumble of stinking alleys, festooned in laundry, teeming with snotty kids at play, rows in the bars, and rue Blaes and rue Haute —two rivers of humanity. Since the Middle Ages the same population had been rotting there, subject to the same injustice, within the same walls, with no way out. To complete the symbolism, the Women's Prison, a monastic prison of days gone by, stood between them on the slope between the Palace and the lower city. The clogs of the prisoners tramping round on the paving stones in the exercise yards made a distant clatter. Up here, the sound of torture was reduced to a faint echo.

My father, an impoverished scholar, had trouble maintaining his émigré existence. I knew him to be in close combat with the moneylenders. His second wife, worn out with childbearing and poverty, underwent terrible crises of hysteria. From the 1st to the 10th of each

month, the household (which I seldom visited) ate reasonably well, from the 10th to the 20th less well, and worst of all from the 20th to the 30th. Certain memories, already old, remained embedded in my soul like nails in flesh: for example (when we were living somewhere in the new district behind the Parc de la Cinquantenaire) my father going out one morning with a cheap little coffin of yellow wood under his arm. His emotionless face: "*Thou shalt seek to obtain thy bread on credit.*" On his return, he retired to the solitude of his anatomy and geology atlases. I had never been to school, for my father despised this "stupid bourgeois instruction for the poor," and could not pay for a private education. He worked with me himself, not often and not well—but the passion for knowledge and the radiance of a constantly armed intelligence, never allowing itself to stagnate, never recoiling from an inquiry or a conclusion, shone from him so powerfully that I was quite hypnotized by it, and went the rounds of museums, libraries, and churches, filling up my notebooks and ransacking encyclopedias. I learned to write without ever knowing grammar; I was eventually to learn French grammar by teaching it to Russian students. For me, learning was not something separate from life: it was life itself. The mysterious relationships between life and death became clear through the very unmysterious importance of worldly goods. The words "bread," "hunger," "money," "no money," "credit," "rent," "landlord" held, in my eyes, a crudely concrete meaning which was, I think, to predispose me in favor of historical materialism . . . Still, my father wanted to make me take up higher education, despite his professed contempt for certificates. He spoke of this often, hoping to influence me in that direction.

Meanwhile, a pamphlet by Peter Kropotkin* spoke to me at that time in a language of unprecedented clarity. I have not looked at it since, and at least thirty years have elapsed since then, but its message remains close to my heart. "What do you want to be?" the anarchist asked young people in the middle of their studies. "Lawyers, to invoke the law of the rich, which is unjust by definition? Doctors, to tend the rich, and prescribe good food, fresh air, and rest to the consumptives of the slums? Architects, to house the landlords in comfort? Look around you, and then examine your conscience. Do you not understand that your duty is quite different: to ally yourselves with the exploited, and

to work for the destruction of an intolerable system?" If I had been the son of a bourgeois university teacher, these arguments would have seemed a trifle abrupt, and over-harsh towards a system which, all the same... I would probably have been seduced by the theory of Progress that advanced ever so gently as the ages passed... Personally, I found these arguments so luminous that those who did not agree with them seemed criminal. I informed my father of my decision not to become a student. The timing was lucky: a rotten end of the month.

"What are you going to do then?"

"Work. I'll study without being a student."

To tell the truth, I was too afraid of sounding pompous or of starting a great disputation of ideas, to dare to reply, "I want to fight as you yourself have fought, as everyone must fight throughout life. I can see quite clearly that you have been beaten. I shall try to have more strength or better luck. There is nothing else for it." That is pretty near what I was thinking.

I was just over fifteen. I became a photographer's apprentice, and after that an office boy, a draughtsman, and, almost, a central heating technician. My day's work was now ten hours long. With the hour and a half allowed for lunch and an hour's journey there and back, that made a day of twelve and a half hours. And juvenile labor was paid ridiculously low wages, if it was paid at all. Plenty of employers offered two years' apprenticeship without pay, in return for teaching a trade. My best early job brought in forty francs (eight dollars) a month, working for an old businessman who owned mines in Norway and Algeria... If, in those days of my adolescence, I had not enjoyed friendship, what would have I enjoyed?

There was a group of us young people, closer than brothers. Raymond, the short-sighted little tough with a sarcastic bent, went back every evening to his drunken old father, whose neck and face were a mass of fantastically knotted muscles. His sister, young, pretty, and a great reader, passed her timid life in front of a window adorned with geraniums, amid the stench of dirty old shoes, still hoping that, some day, someone would pick her up. Jean,[2] an orphan and a part-time

2. de Boë

printer, lived at Anderlecht, beyond the stinking waters of the Senne, with a grandmother who had been laundering for half a century without a break. The third of our group of four, Luce, a tall, pale, timorous boy, was blessed with "a good job" in the L'Innovation department store. He was crushed by it all: discipline, swindling, and futility, futility, futility. Everyone around him in this vast, admirably organized bazaar seemed to be mad, and perhaps, from a certain point of view, he was right to think so. At the end of ten years' hard work, he could become salesman-in-charge, and die as the head of a department, having catalogued a hundred thousand little indignities like the story of the pretty shop assistant who was sacked for rude behavior because she refused to go to bed with a supervisor.

In short, life appeared to us in various versions of a rather degrading captivity. Sundays were a happy release, but that was only once a week, and there was no money. Now and then we would wander along the lively streets of the town center, joyful and sardonic, our heads full of ideas, spurning all temptations with contempt. We were too prone to contempt. We were lean young wolves, full of pride and thought: dangerous types. We had a certain fear of becoming careerists, as we thought about many of our elders who had made some show of being revolutionary, and afterwards . . .

"What will become of us in twenty years' time?" we asked ourselves one evening. Thirty years have passed now. Raymond was guillotined: "Anarchist Gangster" (the press). It was he who, walking towards the worthy Dr. Guillotin's disgusting machine, flung a last sarcasm at the reporters: "Nice to see a man die, isn't it?" I came across Jean again in Brussels, a worker and trade union organizer, still a fighter for liberty after ten years in jail. Luce has died of tuberculosis, naturally. For my part, I have undergone a little over ten years of various forms of captivity, agitated in seven countries, and written twenty books. I own nothing. On several occasions the mass circulation press has hurled filth at me because I spoke the truth. Behind us lies a victorious revolution gone astray, several abortive attempts at revolution, and massacres in so great a number as to make you dizzy. And to think that it is not over yet. Let me be done with this digression; those were the only roads possible for us. I have more confidence in mankind and in the future than ever before.

We were Socialists: members of the Jeunes Gardes.* Ideas were our salvation. There was no need to prove to us, textbook in hand, the existence of social conflict. Socialism gave a meaning to life, and that was: struggle. There were intoxicating demonstrations under heavy flags that were awkward to carry when you had not slept or eaten properly. And then we would see, ascending the balcony of the Maison du Peuple, the slightly satanic forelock, the domed forehead, the twisted mouth of Camille Huysmans.* There were the warlike headlines of *La Guerre Sociale.* Gustave Hervé, leader of the insurrectionist element of the French Socialist Party, organized a poll among his readers: "Should he be killed?" (This was under a Clemenceau* government when workers' blood was spilled). In the wake of the big antimilitarist trials, French deserters brought us the whiff of the aggressive syndicalist trade unionism of Pataud, Pouget,* Broutchoux, Yvetôt,* Griffuelhes,* Lagardelle.* (Of these men, most are now dead; Lagardelle lived to become an adviser to Mussolini and Pétain.) Men escaped from Russia told us of the Sveaborg mutiny, of the dynamiting of an Odessa prison, of executions, of the 1905 general strike, of the days of liberty. The first public discussion I ever opened was on these topics, for the Ixelles branch of the Jeunes Gardes.

Our young contemporaries talked about bicycles or girls in a most loathsome way. We were chaste, expecting better things both from ourselves and from fate. Without benefit of theory, adolescence opened up for us a new aspect of the problem. In a sordid alley, at the end of a dark passage hung with gaudy washing, there lived a family we knew: the mother gross and suspicious, nursing the vestiges of her beauty; a lecherous elder daughter with bad teeth; and a stunning younger girl, of pure Spanish beauty, her eyes all charm, innocence, and softness, her lips like blossom. It was all she could do, when she passed us chaperoned by her dam, to manage a smiling "Hello" to us. "It's obvious," said Raymond, "they're sending her to dancing lessons and keeping her for some rich old bastard." We discussed problems like this. Bebel's* *Woman and Socialism* was on our reading list.

Gradually we found ourselves in conflict not with Socialism, but with all the anti-Socialist interests that crawled around the working-

class movement: crawled around it and seeped into it and ruled over it and smeared dirt on it. The halting points on the routes of local processions were arranged to suit certain tavernkeepers associated with the workers' leagues—impossible to suit them all! Electoral politics revolted us most of all since it concerned the very essence of Socialism. We were at once, it now seems to me, both very just and very unjust, because of our ignorance of life, which is full of complications and compromises. The two percent dividend returned by the cooperatives to their shareholders filled us with bitter laughter because it was impossible for us to grasp the victories behind it. "The presumption of youth!" they said: but in fact we were craving for an absolute. The Racket exists always and everywhere, for it is impossible to escape from one's time and we are in the time of money. I kept finding the Racket, flourishing and sometimes salutary, in the age of trade and in the midst of revolution. We had yearned for a passionate, pure Socialism. We had satisfied ourselves with a Socialism of battle, and it was the great age of reformism. At a special congress of the Belgian Workers' Party, Vandervelde,* young still, lean, dark, and full of fire, advocated the annexation of the Congo. We stood up in protest and left the hall, gesturing vehemently. Where could we go, what could become of us with this need for the absolute, this yearning for battle, this blind desire, against all obstacles, to escape from the city and the life from which there was no escape?

We needed a principle. To strive for and to achieve: a way of life. I now understand, in the light of reflection, how easy it is for charlatans to offer vain solutions to the young: "March in rows of four and believe in Me." For lack of anything better... It is the failures of the others that makes for the strength of the *führers*. When there's no worthwhile banner, you start to march behind worthless ones. When you don't have the genuine article, you live with the counterfeit. The co-op managers used to harass us. In his anger one of them called us "tramps" because we were handing out leaflets in front of his shop. I can still recall our (bitter, bitter) sniggers. A Socialist, who used "tramp" as an insult. He would have chased Maxim Gorky* away! I cannot recall why a certain councilor M.B. seemed important to me; I arranged to meet him. I was confronted by a very fat gentleman who

was very keen to show me the plans of the delightful house he was having built on favorably priced ground. I tried in vain to bring him onto the ground of ideas: total failure. And to think that one needed to go beyond that in order to move onto the ground of action. Too many different grounds, and this gentleman had his, duly listed in the Land Register. He was gradually getting richer. Perhaps I misjudged him. If he contributed to the cleaning up of a working-class district, his passage through life would not have been in vain. But he was not able to explain it to me and at the time I couldn't understand it.

Socialism meant reformism, parliamentarism, and repellent doctrinal rigidity. Its intransigence was incarnated in Jules Guesde,* who made one think of a city of the future in which all the houses would be alike, with an all-powerful State, harsh towards heretics. Our way of correcting this doctrinal rigidity was to refuse to believe in it. We had to have an absolute, only one of liberty (without unnecessary metaphysics); a principle of life, only unselfish and ardent; a principle of action, only not to win a place in this stifling world (which is still a fashionable game), but to try, however desperately, to escape from it since it was impossible to destroy it. We would have been inspired by the class struggle if someone had explained it to us, and if it had been a bit more of a real struggle. Instead, the revolution did not seem possible to anyone in this calm moment of abundance before the Great War. Those who spoke about it did it so badly that it all seemed reduced to a matter of selling pamphlets. M. Bergeret was holding forth on the white stone.[3]

That principle was offered us by an anarchist. He to whom I am referring has been dead many years. His shadow lingers on, greater than the man himself. A miner from the Borinage, recently released from prison, Émile Chapelier* had just founded a communist—or rather communitarian—colony in the forest of Soignes, at Stockel. At Aiglemont, in the Ardennes, Fortuné Henry, brother of the guillotined terrorist Émile Henry,* was running a similar Arcady. "To live

3. Reference to two novels by Anatole France, *M. Bergeret à Paris* and *Sur la pierre blanche*.

in freedom and work in community, from this day on..." We went along sunlit paths up to a hedge, and then to a gate. Buzzing of bees, golden summer, eighteen years old, and the doorway to Anarchy! There was an open-air table, loaded with tracts and pamphlets. The CGT *Soldier's Handbook*, *The Immorality of Marriage*, *The New Society*, *Planned Procreation*, *The Crime of Obedience*, *Citizen Aristide Briand's Speech on the General Strike.* Those voices were alive. A saucer full of small change, and a notice, "Take what you want, leave what you can." Breathtaking discovery! The whole city, the whole earth was counting its pennies, one was presented with money boxes on special occasions: No Credit, Trust Nobody, Shut the Door Firmly, What's Mine is Mine, yes? Monsieur Th——, my employer, a colliery owner, issued all postage stamps himself; impossible to cheat this millionaire out of ten centimes! We were amazed at the pennies abandoned by Anarchy to the sky.

A little farther on, and we came to a small white house under the trees: DO WHAT YOU WILL over the door, which was open to all comers. In the farmyard, a big black devil with a pirate's profile was haranguing a rapt audience. A real style to the man, his tone bantering, his repartee devastating. His theme: free love. But how could love not be free?

Printers, gardeners, a cobbler, a painter were working here in comradeship, together with their womenfolk. It would have been idyllic, if only... They had started with nothing, like brothers; they still had to tighten their belts. Usually these colonies collapsed quite quickly, for lack of resources. Although jealousy was formally prohibited in them, quarrels over women, even when resolved by bursts of generosity, did them the greatest mischief. The libertarian colony of Stockel, transferred to Boitsfort, spun out for several years. There we learned to edit, set up, proofread, and print, all by ourselves, our paper *Communiste*, which consisted of four small pages. Some tramps, a short, prodigiously intelligent Swiss plasterer; a Tolstoyan-anarchist Russian officer, Leon Gerassimov, with a pale, noble face, who had escaped from a defeated insurrection and, the following year, was to die of hunger in the forest of Fontainebleau; also a redoubtable chemist,

from Odessa via Buenos Aires—all these helped us to investigate the solutions of many a great problem.

The individualist printer: "Friend, there is only yourself in the world. You must try not to be a bastard or a ninny."

The Tolstoyan: "Let us be new men. Salvation is within us."

The Swiss plasterer, a disciple of Luigi Bertoni*: "All right, so long as you don't forget your hob-nailed boots: you'll find those in the building sites."

The chemist, having listened long, said in his Russo-Spanish accent: "All this is claptrap, comrades; in the social war we need good laboratories." Sokolov was a cold-blooded man, molded in Russia by inhuman struggles, apart from which he could no longer live. He came out of the storm, and the storm was within him. He fought, he killed, he died in prison.

The idea of "good laboratories" was of Russian origin. From Russia, swarming through the world, came men and women who had been formed in ruthless battle, who had but one aim in life, who drew their breath from danger. The comfort, peace, and agreeableness of life in the West seemed inane to them, and angered them all the more since they had learned to see the naked operations of a social machinery that no one thought of in these privileged lands. In Switzerland, Tatiana Leontieva killed a gentleman she mistook for a Minister of the Tsar. Rips* fired on the Gardes Républicains from the top deck of a bus in the Place de la République. A revolutionary, trusted by the police, executed the head of the Okhrana's Secret Service in a hotel room at Belleville. In a mean quarter of London called Houndsditch (a name appropriate to such squalid dramas), Russian anarchists withstood a siege in the cellar of a jeweler's shop; the picture of Winston Churchill, then a young cabinet Minister, directing the siege became a photographer's cliché. In Paris, Svoboda was blown up while trying out his bombs in the Bois de Boulogne. "Alexander Sokolov" (whose real name was Vladimir Hartenstein) belonged to the same group as Svoboda. In his little room behind a shop in the Rue de la Musée, he had installed a complete laboratory, just a few yards from the Royal Library, where he spent part of his day writing to his friends in Russia and Argentina, in Greek characters but in Spanish.

It was a time of potbellied peace: the atmosphere was strangely electric, the calm before the storm of 1914. The first Clemenceau government had just spilled working-class blood at Draveil (in 1908), where police had entered a strike meeting only to shoot and kill several innocent people, and at the funeral demonstration for these victims, where troops opened fire. (This demonstration had been organized by the secretary of the Food Workers Union, Métivier, an extreme-Left militant and police spy who the previous day had received his personal instructions from the Minister of the Interior, Georges Clemenceau himself.) I remember our anger when we learnt of these shootings. That same evening a hundred of us youngsters showed the red flag in the neighborhood of the Government buildings, willingly battling with the police. We felt ourselves close to all the victims and rebels in the world; we would have fought joyfully for the men executed in the prisons of Montjuich or Alcala del Valle, whose sufferings we recalled each day. We felt the growth within us of a wonderful and formidable collective awareness.

Sokolov laughed at our demonstration, mere child's play. He himself was silently preparing the real reply to the workers' murderers. At the end of a sad train of events, his laboratory was discovered; he found himself hounded down, without means of escape. Flight was impossible because of his face, notable for its intense eyes and conspicuous in a crowd because the top part of his nose had been crushed (apparently with a blow from an iron bar). He shut himself up in a furnished room at Ghent, loaded his revolvers, and waited; and when the police came, he fired on them as he had fired on the Tsar's police. The peaceful sergeants of Ghent paid for the Cossacks' pogroms and Sokolov laid down his life, "whether here or there matters little, so long as one lays it down on the great day, for the awakening of the oppressed." If nobody, in this thriving Belgium where the working class was becoming a real power, with its co-ops, its wealthy unions, its articulate representatives, could understand the language and the actions of frustrated idealists molded by Russian despotism, then how could a Sokolov do so? Our group was able to grasp it better than he but not totally. We decided to defend him before public opinion and in court, which I did as a defense witness at the trial in Ghent. This campaign,

together with many other instances, made our existence in that place untenable. Our group's propaganda was extremely uncompromising, for we felt an almost fatal spirit of defiance. It became impossible for me to find any work, even as a semi-skilled typographer, and I was not alone. We felt like we were in a vacuum and did not know who to turn to. We refused to understand this city, one where we could not have changed anything even by getting ourselves killed on the streets...

In the Rue de Ruysbroek, at the shop of a little grocer-cum-bookseller who was suspected of being an informer, I had met Edouard,[4] a metal-turner; he was thickset, with the physique of some sideshow Hercules, and a heavy, muscular face lit up by his timorous, crafty little eyes. He had come from the factories of Liège and was fond of reading Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe.* Of himself, he said, "I was well on the way to becoming a splendid ruffian! I was lucky to begin to understand." And he told me how on the barges of the Meuse he had lived a ruffian's life ("Just like the others, only tougher, of course"), terrorizing the women a little, working hard, with the odd bit of pilfering from the docks, "Without knowing what a man is or what life is." A faded young woman, hair full of nits, holding a baby, listened on, as did the old informer, while Edouard confessed to me how he had become politically "conscious." He asked to be admitted into our group. "What ought I to read, do you think?"

"Élisée Reclus,*" I answered.

"Isn't it too difficult?"

"No," I replied, but already I was beginning to see just how tremendously difficult it was. We let him join, and he was a good comrade. Our times together were not clouded by the foreknowledge that he would die, by his own hand, close to me.

Paris called us, the Paris of Salvat, of the Commune, of the CGT,* of little journals printed with burning zeal; the Paris of our favorite authors, Anatole France and Jehan Rictus*; the Paris where Lenin* from time to time edited *Iskra* and spoke at émigré meetings in little cooperative houses; the Paris where the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Revolutionary Party* had its headquarters, where

4. Carouy.

Burtsev lived, who had just unmasked, in the terrorist organization of this party, Evno Azev, engineer, executioner of Minister von Plehve and of Grand Duke Sergei, and police spy. I took my leave of Raymond with bitter irony. I noticed him on a street corner, unemployed, handing out advertisements for a tailor's shop. "Hello there, Free Man!" I said, "Why not Sandwich Man?"

"Perhaps it will come to that," he said, laughing, "but no more towns for me. They are nothing but treadmills. I want to work or bust on the open road; I shall at least have fresh air and countryside. I've had a bellyful of all these deadpans. I'm only waiting to get enough to buy a pair of shoes." He went off with his mate by the Ardennes roads, to Switzerland and the open spaces, helping with the harvest, raising limestone with masons, cutting timber with woodcutters, a floppy old felt hat over his eyes, a volume of Verhaeren* in his pocket:

> Drunk with the world and with ourselves, we bring
> Hearts of new men to the old universe.

I have often thought since then that poetry was a substitute for prayer for us, so greatly did it uplift us and answer our constant need for exaltation. Verhaeren, the European poet nearest to Walt Whitman (whom we did not yet know), flashed us a gleam of keen, anguished, fertile thought on the modern town, its railway stations, its trade in women, its swirling crowds, and his cries of violence were like ours: "*Open or break your fists against the door!*" Fists were broken, and why not? Better that than stagnation. Jehan Rictus lamented the suffering of the penniless intellectual dragging out his nights on the benches of foreign boulevards, and no rhymes were richer than his: *songe-mensonge* (dream-lie), *espoir-désespoir* (hope-despair). In springtime "*the smell of crap and lilacs . . .*"

One day I went off, all at random, taking ten francs, a spare shirt, some workbooks, and some photos that I always kept with me. In front of the station I chanced to meet my father and we talked of the recent discoveries on the structure of matter, which had been popularized by Gustave Le Bon.

"Are you off?"

"Yes, to Lille for a fortnight."

I believed it. I was never to come back, never to see my father again—but the last letters I had from him in Brazil when I was in Russia, thirty years later, still spoke of the structure of the American continent and the history of civilizations.

Europe at that time knew no passports, and frontiers hardly existed. I stayed in a mining village at Fives in Lille: two and a half francs a week (fifty U.S. cents), payable in advance, for a clean garret. I wanted to go down the mine. Some cheery old miners laughed in my face: "You'd be finished in two hours, friend." On the third day, I had four francs left. I went to look for work, rationing myself: every day a pound of bread, two pounds of green pears, a glass of milk (bought on credit from my kind hostess), twenty-five centimes to spend. Annoyingly enough, the soles of my shoes began to let me down, and on the eighth day of this routine, attacks of giddiness forced me to seek the haven of benches in the public gardens. I was obsessed by a dream of bacon soup. My strength was ebbing; I was going to be good for nothing, not even for the worst possible existence. An iron footbridge over the railway line in the station began to exert an absurd fascination over me, when I was saved by a providential meeting with a comrade who was supervising drain digging in the street. Almost at once I found work with a photographer at Armentières, at four francs a day—a fortune. I was unwilling to leave the mining village, and went out at dawn in the sad morning mist with the workers in their leather helmets. I traveled to work amongst slag heaps, then shut myself up all day in a poky laboratory where we worked alternately by green light and red. In the evening, before fatigue could prostrate me, I would spend a little while reading Jaurès's* *L'Humanité*, with mingled admiration and annoyance. A couple lived behind the partition. They adored one another, and the man used to beat his wife savagely before taking her. I could hear her murmur through her sobs, "Hit me again, again." I found inadequate the studies of working-class women that I had read hitherto. Would it after all take centuries to transform this world and these human beings? Yet each one of us has only one life in front of him. What was to be done?

Anarchism swept us away completely because it both demanded everything of us and offered us everything. There was no remotest corner of life that it failed to illumine; at least so it seemed to us. A man could be a Catholic, a Protestant, a Liberal, a Radical, a Socialist, even a syndicalist, without in any way changing his own life, and therefore life in general. It was enough for him, after all, to read the appropriate newspaper; or, if he was strict, to frequent the café associated with whatever tendency claimed his allegiance. Shot through with contradictions, fragmented into varieties and sub-varieties, anarchism demanded, before anything else, harmony between deeds and words (which, in truth, is demanded by all forms of idealism, but which they all forget as they become complacent). That is why we adopted what was (at that moment) the extremest variety, which by vigorous dialectic had succeeded, through the logic of its revolutionism, in discarding the necessity for revolution. To a certain extent we were impelled in that direction by our disgust with a certain type of rather mellow, academic anarchism, whose Pope was Jean Grave* in *Temps Nouveaux.* Individualism had just been affirmed by our hero Albert Libertad.* No one knew his real name, or anything of him before he started preaching. Crippled in both legs, walking on crutches which he plied vigorously in fights (he was a great one for fighting, despite his handicap), he bore, on a powerful body, a bearded head whose face was finely proportioned. Destitute, having come as a tramp from the south, he began his preaching in Montmartre, among libertarian circles and the queues of poor devils waiting for their dole of soup not far from the site of Sacré Coeur. Violent, magnetically attractive, he became the heart and soul of a movement of such exceptional dynamism that it is not entirely dead even at this day. Libertad loved streets, crowds, fights, ideas, and women. On two occasions he set up house with a pair of sisters, the Mahés and then the Morands. He had children whom he refused to register with the State. "The State? Don't know it. The name? I don't give a damn; they'll pick one that suits them. The law? To hell with it." He died in hospital in 1908 as the result of a fight, bequeathing his body ("That carcass of mine," he called it) for dissection in the cause of science.

His teaching, which we adopted almost wholesale, was: "Don't wait for the revolution. Those who promise revolution are frauds just

like the others. Make your own revolution, by being free men and living in comradeship." Obviously I am simplifying, but the idea itself had a beautiful simplicity. Its absolute commandment and rule of life was: "Let the old world go to blazes." From this position there were naturally many deviations. Some inferred that one should "live according to Reason and Science," and their impoverished worship of science, which invoked the mechanistic biology of Félix le Dantec,* led them on to all sorts of tomfoolery, such as a saltless, vegetarian diet and fruitarianism and also, in certain cases, to tragic ends. We saw young vegetarians involved in pointless struggles against the whole of society. Others decided, "Let's be outsiders. The only place for us is the fringe of society." They did not stop to think that society has no fringe, that no one is ever outside it, even in the depth of dungeons, and that their "conscious egoism," sharing the life of the defeated, linked up from below with the most brutal bourgeois individualism.

Finally, others, including myself, sought to harness together personal transformation and revolutionary action, in accordance with the motto of Élisée Reclus: "As long as social injustice lasts we shall remain in a state of permanent revolution." (I am quoting this from memory.) Libertarian individualism gave us a hold over the most intense reality: ourselves. *Be yourself.* Only, it developed in another "city without escape"—Paris, an immense jungle where all relationships were dominated by a primitive individualism, dangerous in a different way from ours, that of a positively Darwinian struggle for existence. Having bid farewell to the humiliations of poverty, we found ourselves once again up against them. To be yourself would have been a precious commandment and perhaps a lofty achievement, if only it had been possible. It would only have begun to be possible once the most pressing needs of man, those that identify him more closely with the brutes than with his fellow humans, were satisfied. We had to win our food, lodging, and clothing by main force; and after that, to find time to read and think. The problem of the penniless youngster, uprooted or (as we used to say) "foaming at the bit" through irresistible idealism, confronted us in a form that was practically insoluble. Many comrades were soon to slide into what was called "illegalism," a way of life not so much on the fringe of society as on the fringe of morality.

"We refuse to be either exploiters or exploited," they declared, without perceiving that they were continuing to be both these and, what is more, becoming hunted men. When they knew that the game was up they chose to kill themselves rather than go to jail.

One of them, who never went out without his Browning revolver, told me, "Prison isn't worth living for! Six bullets for the sleuthhounds and the seventh for me! You know, I'm lighthearted." A light heart is a heavy burden. The principle of self-preservation that is in us all found its consequence, within the social jungle, in a battle of One against All. A positive explosion of despair was building up in us, unbeknown.

There are ideas—and behind these ideas, in the recesses of consciousness, where they develop as a product of repression, of denial, of sublimation, of intuition and many other phenomena which have no name, there is a shapeless, vast, often oppressive, profound sense of being. Our thinking had its roots in despair. Nothing was to be done. This world was unacceptable in itself, and unacceptable the lot it offers us. Man is finished, lost. We are beaten in advance, whatever we do. A young anarchist midwife gave up her calling "because it is a crime to inflict life on a human being." Years later, awakened into hope by the Russian Revolution, I wanted to reach Petrograd, then in flames, and agreed to pass through a sector of the Champagne front, at the risk either of being left there in a common grave or of killing men better than myself in the opposite trench. I wrote: "Life is not such a great benefit that it is wrong to lose it or criminal to take it." Anatole France gave voice to some of the most characteristic of these intuitions in his work, ending his great satire of the history of France, *Penguin Island*, with the appraisal that the best thing to do in the circumstances was to invent some devilishly powerful machine to destroy the planet, "so as to gratify the universal conscience which didn't exist, anyway." Thus the litterateur of skepticism closed the vicious circle in which we were turning, and he did it out of kindness.

René Valet,* my friend, was a lively, restless spirit. We had met in the Quartier Latin, we had discussed everything together, usually at night, around the Ste. Geneviève hill, in the little bars jostling on the

Boulevard St. Michel: Barrès, Anatole France, Apollinaire, Louis Nazzi. Together we muttered scraps of Vildrac's *White Bird*, Jules Romains's *Ode to the Crowd*, Jehan Rictus's *The Ghost*. René was law-abiding and prosperous, he even had his own locksmith's workshop, not far from Denfert-Rochereau. I can see him there now, standing up like a young Siegfried, criticizing Anatole France's treatment of the destruction of this planet. Having had his say, René would sink slowly down on the asphalt of the boulevard, with a sly grin. "What is certain is that we are all mugs. Yes, mugs."

I remember his fine, square-set ginger head, his powerful chin, his green eyes, his strong hands, his athlete's bearing (an emancipated athlete, naturally). He liked to wear the navvy's wide corduroy trousers, with a waistband of blue flannel. Once, on an evening of riots, we wandered together around a guillotine, ridden by our gloom, sickened by our feebleness, mad with anger. "We have a wall in front of us," we told each other, "and what a wall." "Oh, the bastards!" muttered my ginger-headed friend, and next day he confessed to me that all that night his hand had been closed upon the chill blackness of a Browning revolver. Fight, fight, what else was there to do? And if it meant death, no matter. René rushed into mortal danger out of his sense of solidarity with his defeated mates, out of his need for battle, and, at the heart of it, out of despair. These "conscious egoists" were going to get themselves slaughtered for friendship's sake.

I had arrived in Paris a little after the death of Libertad. The luxurious Paris of Passy and the Champs-Elysées, and even of the great boulevards of commerce, was for us like a foreign or enemy city. Our own Paris had three centers: the great working-class town that began somewhere in a grim zone of canals, cemeteries, waste plots, and factories, around Charonne, Pantin, and the Flandre bridge; it climbed the heights of Belleville and Menilmontant, and there became a plebeian capital, lively, busy, and egalitarian like an ant-heap; and then, on its frontiers with the town of railway stations and delights, became cluttered with shady districts. Small hotels for a "short time," "sleep-sellers" where for twenty sous one could gasp in a garret without ventilation, pubs frequented by procurers, swarms of women with coiled hair and colored aprons soliciting on the pavements.

The rumbling trains of the Métro would suddenly plunge into a tunnel under the town, and I would linger in a circle of passersby to hear and see Hercules and the Boneless Wonder with their fantastic patter, clowns with a waggish dignity who always needed just another fifteen sous before they would perform their best tricks, upon an old rug spread on the pavement. And inside another circle, as evening came on and the workshops emptied, the blind man, his stout female assistant, and the soulful orphan girl would sing the popular songs of the day: "*The riders of the moo-oon...*" and in the ballad there was also some mention of "dusky night" and "desperate love."

Our Montmartre adjoined, but never met, the Montmartre of artists' taverns, bars haunted by women in feathered hats and hobble-skirts, the Moulin Rouge, etc. We acknowledged only old Frédé's Lapin Agile, where people sang old French songs, some perhaps going back to the days of François Villon, who was a wandering, despairing, merry young sprig, a poet, a rebel like us, and a gallows bird. The old Rue des Rosiers, where the generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas were shot under the Commune, now renamed the Rue du Chevalier de la Barre, had, since the time of the barricades, only changed its appearance at one point along its extent. There, at the top of the slope, the basilica of Sacré Coeur de Jesus was slothfully nearing completion, in a sort of fake Hindu, monumentally bourgeois style. Hard by the stone yards here, young radical thinkers had put up a statue of the young Chevalier de la Barre who had been burnt by the Inquisition.

The basilica and the white marble Chevalier looked down on the roofs of Paris: ocean of gray roofs, over which there arose at night only a few dim lights, and a great red glow from the tumultuous squares. We would pause there to take stock of our ideas. At the other end of the street, a lopsided square stretched at the crossing of two roads, one a steep incline, the other rising in flights of dull gray steps. In front of a tall and ancient shuttered house, the journal *Causeries Populaires* and the offices of *L'Anarchie*, both founded by Libertad, occupied a shabby building, filled with the noise of printing presses, singing, and passionate discussion. There I met Rirette Maîtrejean,* a short, slim, aggressive girl, militant, with a Gothic profile, and the theoretician Émile Armand,* sickly and goateed, his pince-nez all

askew, once a Salvation Army officer, lately a convict in solitary confinement, a stubborn, often subtle dialectician who used to argue purely on the basis of self. "I only propose, never impose," he would almost splutter; yet out of his spluttering emerged the most disastrous theory possible: that of "illegalism." This transformed lovers of liberty, "outsiders," enthusiasts for comradely living, into technicians of obscure and illicit crafts.

The most important subject of our discussions, some of which ended in shooting and bloodletting among comrades, was "the importance of science." Should scientific law regulate the whole life of the New Man, to the exclusion of irrational sentiment and of all idealism "inherited from ancestral faiths"? Taine and Renan's blind cult of science, here reduced to almost algebraic formulae by fanatical popularizers, became the catechism of individualist revolt: "Myself alone against all," and "Nothing means anything to me," as the Hegelian Max Stirner* once proclaimed. The doctrine of "comradely living" slightly counteracted the unpardonable isolation of these rebels, but out of it was emerging a constricted coterie, equipped with a psychological jargon demanding a long initiation. I found this coterie at once fascinating and repellent. I was at some distance from those primitive conceptions. Other influences were at work on me, and there were other values that I neither could nor would abandon: basically, the revolutionary idealism of the Russians.

I had happened to find work easily at Belleville, as a draughtsman in a machine-tool works, ten hours a day, twelve and a half including the journeys, starting at 6:30 a.m. In the evenings I went, by the funicular railway and the Métro, to the Left Bank, the Latin Quarter, our third Paris—the one I liked best, to tell the truth. I had an hour and a half at my disposal to read at the Ste. Geneviève Library, with eyes that stubbornly refused to stay open over political economy, and a tired intellect functioning now only at half-cock. I took to alcohol to help me to read, but I only forgot everything the following day.

I left the brutalizing atmosphere of my "good job," the pallid fascination of the Chaumont hills in the morning and the fascination of evening, when the street was full of lights and the eyes of working

girls. I proceeded to settle myself in the garret of an inn, in the Place du Panthéon, trying to live by teaching French to Russian students and by doing jobs of routine brainwork. It was better to feel a faint pinch of hunger reading in the Luxembourg Gardens than to eat my fill by sketching crankshafts till I could no longer think.

From my window I could see the square, the Panthéon gate, and Rodin's *Thinker.* I would have liked to know the exact spot on which Dr. Tony Moilin had been shot in 1871 for tending the Commune's wounded. The bronze Thinker seemed to me to be meditating on that crime, and waiting to be shot himself. After all, how insolent he was, doing nothing but thinking, and how dangerous if he ever came to a conclusion.

A Social-Revolutionary had introduced me to the members of his party among the Russian émigrés. He was a large, hairless gentleman of Americanized manners, often sent off by the party on missions to the United States. The Russian Social-Revolutionary Party was passing through a serious crisis of morale, since several police agents had been unmasked in its Battle Organization—for example, Azev and Zhuchenko. The militant who had greeted me on my arrival, with whom I had often discussed Maeterlinck* and the meaning of life all night long, was called Patrick. He led an exemplary life, kept faith amid the general demoralization, and cultivated a healthy optimism. When the Paris archives of the Okhrana's Secret Service were opened in 1917 we found that Patrick was also a police agent, but that was really no longer of any importance.

I led a many-sided life: I was attracted by the partisan warriors of Paris, that sub-proletariat of déclassé, "emancipated" men, dreaming of freedom and dignity and constantly on the verge of imprisonment, and among the Russians I breathed a much purer air, distilled in sacrifice, energy, and culture. I taught French to a stunning young woman who always wore red dresses, a Maximalist,* one of the few survivors of the attempt at Aptekarsky Island, in St. Petersburg. There three Maximalists had presented themselves in uniform at a reception in the villa of the Prime Minister, Stolypin, and suffered themselves to be roasted in the hall, so as to make sure that the villa would be blown

up to practically nothing. People around me spoke of them as if they had only just gone out of the room; of Salomon Ryss, alias Medved, the Bear, who had joined the Okhrana to disrupt and disorganize it, had been caught and recently hanged; of Petrov, who had done the same at St. Petersburg, and had lately assassinated the head of the secret police; of Gershuni, who refused a pardon out of contempt for the Tsar—they dared not hang him all the same—then escaped, and died here, not far from us, of tuberculosis; of Igor Sazonov who twice offered up his life, first when he threw a bomb under von Plehve's carriage, and again when he killed himself in jail, a few months before he was due for release, in protest against the maltreatment of his comrades. The new theory of energy of Mach and Avenarius, revising the notion of matter, was of cardinal importance for us.

Coming from these discussions, I would meet old Edouard Ferral, selling his copies of *L'Intransigeant* on the corner of the Boulevard St. Michel and the Rue Soufflot. *L'Intran, L'Intran!*: he proclaimed his wares in a soft, trembling voice. He sported an improbable pair of worn-out boots, and a complete, authentic tramp's outfit. A disgraceful yellow straw hat sat like a halo on his head. Bearded like Socrates, a lively glow in his eyes (which were the color of Seine water), he lived, wanting even elementary necessities, among the lowest of the low. I never knew under what strains he had been brought so low, for certainly his was one of the finest intelligences of the libertarian movement, naturally heretical, loved and admired by the young. Deeply learned, reciting and translating Virgil with lyrical passion in down-at-heel pubs in the Place Maubert (where we willingly followed him), a disciple of Georges Sorel* and himself a theoretician of syndicalism, he blended this theory with the ideas of Mécislas Golberg,* who practically died of hunger in the Latin Quarter affirming that the highest revolutionary vocation was the thief's.

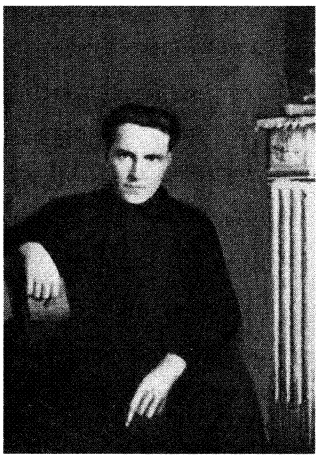
It was Ferral who introduced me to the terrifying world of utmost poverty, spiritless degradation; the borderline of humanity under the rubble of the great city. There, a tradition of total, overwhelming defeat had been kept up—as it still is—for at least ten centuries. These wretches were the lineal descendants of the first beggars of Paris, perhaps of Roman Lutetia's meanest plebs. They were older than Notre

Dame, and neither Ste. Geneviève nor the blessed Virgin had ever been able to do anything for them: proof, of course, that they were beyond redemption. I saw them in the bistros of La Maub, drinking their draught wine, eating the pork shop's refuse, repairing the dressings (sometimes spectacularly faked) on their sores. I heard them discuss the affairs of their guilds, the allotment of a particular begging pitch that had become vacant through the passing of a certain member, lately found dead under a bridge. Others would be replenishing their trays with matches and shoelaces, others again discreetly delousing themselves. You had to be invited to get into their place and they gave you intrigued, tearful, and scornful looks. It smelled like a cage in a zoo in that place, where at times the tramps slept leaning against a stretched line, whenever the cold and the rain make the open ground and the arches under the bridges too inhospitable. Between them, they only spoke *armuche*, a particular slang a bit different from that of the young males in flat caps sitting at the windows of the nearest bistros to keep an eye on their women, standing in the shadows of nearby doorways touting for business. These young men and their 40-sous rent-girls were the aristocrats of that milieu. I observed, terrified, what the city could do to man, the mangy, pestiferous, kenneled cur's existence to which it reduced him, and this helped me to understand Peter Lavrov's* *Historical Letters*, concerning social justice.

The *clochard* is a spent individual, squeezed dry of personal initiative, who has learnt to enjoy, feebly but stubbornly, the meager vegetable existence which is all that he has. The ragpickers were a world apart, adjacent but separate, centering on the Barrière d'Italie at St. Ouen; some of the less abandoned managed to accumulate a positive treasure by exploiting an abundant raw material: the town's refuse. The genuine human refuse could not even do that, having too little energy and too much sloth to pursue the systematic efforts of the dustbin brigade. It was my lot, during a bad time, to spend some days in a related world, that of the hawkers of special editions of the big newspapers. Some poor wretches would stand at a side entrance of *Le Matin*, in a special queue, to buy ten copies which they would then sell in the Boulevard Saint-Denis, risking a punch in the face from the usual news vendor, all for twenty centimes. Any disturbance drew the

attention of the police and vendors, who would grab them and throw them into the street like the human refuse that they were. Get lost, you louse!

I translated Russian novels and poems—Artzybashev,* Balmont, Merezhkovsky—for a charming Russian journalist under whose signature they appeared.[5] Thanks to this employment I was able to buy onion soup for Ferral at the stroke of midnight by a brazier in Les Halles beneath the squat, massive silhouette of St. Eustache. One of the peculiar features of working-class Paris at this time was that it bordered extensively on the underworld, that is, on the vast world of irregulars, outcasts, paupers, and criminals. There were few essential differences between the young worker or artisan from the old central districts and the pimp from the alleys by Les Halles. A chauffeur or mechanic with any wits about him would pilfer all he could from the employers as a matter of course, out of class consciousness ("One less for the guv'nor!") and because he was "liberated" of old-fashioned morality. Working-class attitudes, aggressive and anarchic, were pulled in opposite directions by two antagonistic movements, the revolutionary syndicalism of the CGT which, with a fresh and powerful idealism, was winning the real proletariat to the struggle for positive demands, and the shapeless activity of the anarchist groups. Between and beneath these two currents, restless and disaffected masses were being borne along. Two extraordinary demonstrations of this time marked an epoch for me and for the whole of Paris; I think that no historian will be able to ignore their significance.



Victor Kibalchich ("le Rétif") at twenty

The first one took place on 13 October 1909. On that day we heard

5. J. Povolozky.

the news of an incredible event: the execution of Francisco Ferrer,* decreed by Maura and permitted by Alfonso XIII. The founder of the Modern School in Barcelona, condemned absurdly for a popular uprising of some days' duration, fell back into the ditch at Montjuich shouting to the firing squad: "I forgive you, children! Aim straight!" (Later on he was "rehabilitated" by Spanish justice.) I had written, even before his arrest, the first article in the great press campaign conducted on his behalf. His transparent innocence, his educational activity, his courage as an independent thinker, and even his man-in-the-street appearance endeared him infinitely to the whole of a Europe that was, at the time, liberal by sentiment and in intense ferment. A true international consciousness was growing from year to year, step by step with the progress of capitalist civilization. Frontiers were crossed without formalities; some trade unions subsidized travel for their members; commercial and intellectual exchanges seemed to be unifying the world. Already in 1905 the anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia had roused a universal wave of condemnation. From one end of the Continent to the other (except in Russia and Turkey) the judicial murder of Ferrer had, within twenty-four hours, moved whole populations to incensed protest.

In Paris the movement was spontaneous. By hundreds of thousands, from every *faubourg*, workers and ordinary folk, impelled by a terrible indignation, flowed towards the city center. The revolutionary groups followed rather than guided these masses. The editors of revolutionary journals, taken aback by their sudden influence, spread the call: "To the Spanish Embassy!" The Embassy would have been ransacked had not Lépine, the Police Commissioner, barricaded all entries to the Boulevard Malesherbes. Angry riots started in these prosperous thoroughfares, lined with banks and aristocratic residences.

The backwash of the crowds carried me among newspaper kiosks blazing on the pavements and overturned omnibuses whose horses, painstakingly unharnessed, gazed stupidly at their empty contraptions. Police cyclists charged, weaving their machines to and fro at random. Lépine was shot at from ten yards by a revolver from somewhere in a group of journalists belonging to *La Guerre Sociale*, *Le Libertaire*, and *L'Anarchie*. Weariness and the onset of night calmed

the outburst, which left the people of Paris with an exultant sensation of strength. The government authorized a legal demonstration two days after, led by Jaurès. We marched along, five hundred thousand of us, surrounded by mounted Gardes Républicains who sat all subdued, taking the measure of this newly risen power.

There was a natural transition from this demonstration to the second. Miguel Almereyda* had participated in the organization of the first, and was the moving force behind its successor. I had helped him hide in Brussels, where he had brusquely ridiculed my momentary Tolstoyan fancies. In short, we were friends. I told him, "You're just an opportunist. Your people have started off quite wrong." He answered, "As far as Paris is concerned you are an ignoramus, my friend. You can purify yourself with Russian novels, but here the revolution needs cash."

He incarnated human achievement in a measure so far practically unknown to me. He had the physical beauty of the purebred Catalan—tall forehead, blazing eyes—allied with an extreme elegance. A brilliant journalist, a captivating orator, a capable libertarian politician, adroit in business, he was able to handle a crowd or fix a trial, to brave the bludgeons of the police, the revolvers of certain comrades, or the spite of the Government, and to concoct fantastic intrigues. In the ministries, he had his connections; in the slums, his devoted friends.

He was behind the disappearance from Clemenceau's drawer of a receipt for 500 francs signed by an *agent provocateur* in the syndicalist movement. He then presented himself at the Assize Court and was acquitted with the jury's congratulations. He organized the circulation of *La Guerre Sociale*, whose guiding spirit he was, together with Gustave Hervé ("The General") and Eugène Merle who was to become Paris's most powerful and Balzacian journalist. Almereyda had experienced a scarifying childhood, partly in a reformatory for a minor theft. It was he who, after the Ferrer demonstration, seized upon the Liabeuf affair. This was the prelude to a number of other dramas.

It was a battle of low life. Liabeuf, a young worker of twenty who had grown up on the Boulevard de Sebastopol, fell in love with a little streetwalker. The vice squad, those persecutors of girls, saw them to-

gether and had him condemned as a pimp. This he was not; on the contrary, his dream was to rescue this girl from "the game." The officially provided defense counsel did not turn up at the trial, the accused man's protests were naturally of no avail, the petty sessions magistrate hurried through the proceedings in five seconds (as usual with these matters), and the police were, of course, on oath. Liabeuf felt branded with infamy. Once out of prison, he armed himself with a revolver, donned spiked armlets under his cloak, and went in quest of vengeance. To arrest him they had to nail him to the wall with a saber blow. He had wounded four policemen, and was condemned to death. The left-wing press indicted the vice squad and demanded a pardon for Liabeuf. Commissioner Lépine, a short gentleman capable of a cold hysteria, whose goatee presided every year over the bludgeoning of the May Day demonstrators, demanded his execution. Almereyda wrote that if they dared to set up the guillotine, there would be more blood around it than beneath it. He appealed to the people of Paris to stop the execution by force. The Socialist Party lent its support to the movement.

On the night of the execution assorted crowds, from all the *faubourgs*, from all those slums stalked by crime and misery, converged upon that unique spot in Paris, always ghastly by day and sinister by night: the Boulevard Arago. On one side, bourgeois houses, impervious to everything, with their windows neatly drawn on "every man for himself" (and "God for all," if you please), on the other, two lines of stout chestnut trees, beneath the Wall—a wall of great cemented stones, dull grayish-brown, that most silent, most pitiless of prison walls: twenty feet high. I had come with Rirette, with René the Angry, with old Ferral who, positively fanatical in affliction, seemed to float along, unbelievably weak, inside his ragged suit. The militants from all the groups were there, forced back by walls of black-uniformed police executing bizarre maneuvers. Shouts and angry scuffles broke out when the guillotine wagon arrived, escorted by a squad of cavalry. For some hours there was a battle on the spot, the police charges forcing us ineffectively, because of the darkness, into side streets from which sections of the crowd would disgorge once again the next minute. Jaurès was recognized at the head of one column and nearly brained.

Almereyda maneuvered in vain to break through the human barrier. There was plenty of violence and a little bloodshed—one policeman killed. At dawn, exhaustion quietened the crowd, and at the instant when the blade fell upon a raging head still yelling its innocence, a baffled frenzy gripped the twenty or thirty thousand demonstrators, and found its outlet in a long-drawn cry: "*Murderers!*" The barriers of policemen now moved only lethargically. "Do you see it? —The wall!" René shouted to me.

When in the morning I returned to that spot of the boulevard, a huge policeman, standing on the square of fresh sand that had been thrown over the blood, was attentively treading a rose into it. A little farther off, leaning against the wall, Ferral was gently wringing his hands: "Society is so iniquitous!"

From this day dates the revulsion and contempt that is aroused in me by the death penalty, which replies to the crime of the primitive, the retarded, the deprived, the half-mad, or the hopeless by nothing short of a collective crime, carried out coldly by men invested with authority, who believe that they are therefore innocent of the pathetic blood they shed. As for the endless torture of life imprisonment or of very lengthy sentences, I know of nothing more stupidly inhuman.

After the fight for Ferrer the philosopher, the battle for Liabeuf the desperado demonstrated (although we could not see it) the seriousness of the blind alley in which the revolutionary movement of Paris was, all tendencies included . . . Energetic and powerful in 1906–07, the Confederation Générale du Travail began to decline, mellowed after a mere few years by the development of highly paid sections among the working class. The "insurrectionism" of Gustave Hervé and Miguel Almereyda revolved in a vacuum, expressing nothing in the end but a craving for verbal and physical violence of a tiny minority. Bloated Europe, whose wealth and prosperity had grown to an unprecedented degree in the thirty years since 1880, still based its social system upon ancient injustices, and thereby created in its great cities a limited but numerous social stratum to whom industrial progress brought no real hope, and only that minimum of consciousness that sufficed to shed light upon its own misfortune. More: through its excess of energy, as well as the incompatibility of its historical struc-

ture with the new needs of society, the whole of this Europe was drawn towards resolving its problems in violence. We breathed the oppressive air of the prelude to war. Events heralded the catastrophe clearly enough: the Agadir incident, the partition of Morocco, the massacre at Casablanca. Italy's aggression against Tripolitania began the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, and the "futurist" poet Marinetti detailed the splendor of bowels steaming in the sun of a battlefield. The Austrian Empire annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Tsar continued to borrow money from the French Republic and to hang and deport the best of the Russian intelligentsia. From the two ends of the globe the Mexican and Chinese revolutions flamed out to illumine our enthusiasm.

On the Left Bank, bordering the Latin Quarter, I had founded a study circle called "Free Inquiry" (*La Libre Recherche*), which met upstairs in a Socialist cooperative in the Rue Grégoire-de-Tours, down dark corridors cluttered with barrels. The houses nearby were brothels, with red lamps, large numerals, brightly lit doors, and signs in seventeenth-century script: THE BASKET OF FLOWERS. The crowded thoroughfare of the Rue de Buci, packed with stalls jutting on to the pavement, unsavory little bars, and costermongers, gave me the sensation (or so I thought) of going back to the Paris of Louis XVI. I was familiar with all the old doors along the street and on the peeling façades above the advertisements for the hire of evening dress, I discerned the brand, invisible to others, of the Reign of Terror.

In public meetings, I would dispute with *Le Sillon*'s Christian Democrats, who were fond of tough, strong-arm tactics, and with the Royalists, roused to a white-hot frenzy by Léon Daudet.* When the tall Leon appeared on the platform with his plump profile, rather like that of a declining Bourbon or an Israelite financier (the similarity between these would be exact), we would form a battle square in a corner of the hall we had picked beforehand, and as soon as his thunderous voice proclaimed "The monarchy, traditional, federalist, anti-Parliamentarian!" etc., our jeering interruptions would chime in: "A century behind the times! Coblenz!* The guillotine!," and I would

demand leave to speak, protected by a rampart of stalwart comrades. The Camelots du Roi* waited for this moment to charge our square, but we were not always defeated.

By contrast Georges Valois,* a former anarchist himself but recently converted to royalism, was very willing to discuss his syndicalist-royalist doctrine; he invoked Nietzsche, Georges Sorel, "the social myth," the communal guilds of the Middle Ages, national sentiment. Meanwhile, certain comrades suggested that I should again take up the editing of *L'Anarchie*, now transferred from Montmartre to the Romainville Gardens, and threatened by splits among the different tendencies. I made it a condition that the previous editorial and printing staff, a collection of "scientific individualists" whose leading light was Raymond, should get out and that I should be allowed to recruit my own colleagues. Nevertheless, for a month two staffs coexisted, the old one and mine.

For a while I caught up again with Raymond and Edouard. They were intoxicated with their "scientific" algebraic formulae and in thrall to their dietary discipline (absolute vegetarianism, no wine or coffee, tea or infusions, and we who ate otherwise were "insufficiently evolved"), ceaselessly denouncing the shortcomings of "feelings," invoking only "scientific reason" and "conscious egoism." I could see clearly that their childish intoxication with "scientism" contained much more ignorance than knowledge, and an intense desire to *live differently* at all costs. A more important conflict separated us—that of illegalism. They were already, or were becoming, outlaws, primarily through the influence of Octave Garnier,* a handsome, swarthy, silent lad whose dark eyes were astoundingly hard and feverish. Small, working-class by origin, Octave had suffered a vicious beating on a building site in the course of a strike. He scorned all discussion with "intellectuals." "Talk, talk!" he would remark softly, and off he would go on the arm of a blonde Rubensesque Flemish girl, to prepare some dangerous nocturnal task or other.

No other man that I have met in my whole life has ever so convinced me of the impotence and even the futility of the intellect when confronted with tough primitive creatures like this, rudely aroused to a form of intelligence that fits them purely technically for the life

struggle. He would have made an excellent seafarer for a Polar expedition, a fine soldier for the colonies, or, in another time, a Nazi stormtroop leader or an NCO for Rommel. There was no doubt of it, all he could be was an outlaw. His was a restless, uncontrolled spirit, in quest of some impossible new dignity, how or what he did not know himself. Petty quarrels multiplied. Raymond, Edouard, and Octave departed soon enough, and I transferred our printshop, in which we lived together as comrades, to the top of Belleville behind the Chaumont hills, in an old workingmen's house in the Rue Fessart. I set out to give a new emphasis to the paper, in the form of a turn from individualism to social action. I opened a polemic against Élie Faure* the art historian who, citing Nietzsche, had just proclaimed the civilizing function of war. I noted, almost enthusiastically, the suicide of Paul and Laura Lafargue, the son-in-law and daughter of Karl Marx. Lafargue, having reached the age of sixty, an age at which, he decided, active creative life was over, administered poison to himself and his wife. I sought to affirm a "doctrine of solidarity and revolt in the here and now," quoting Élisée Reclus: "Man is Nature become conscious of itself." Of Marx I knew practically nothing. We denounced syndicalism as a future Statism, as terrible as any other. The cult of "the workers," a reaction against the politicians (who were primarily lawyers interested in their Parliamentary careers), struck us as being over-rigid and as carrying within itself the seeds of an anti-intellectual careerism.

The end of 1911 saw dramatic happenings. Joseph the Italian, a little militant with frizzled hair who dreamed of a free life in the bush of Argentina, as far away as possible from the towns, was found murdered on the Melun Road. From the grapevine we gathered that an individualist from Lyons, Bonnot* by name (I did not know the man), who had been traveling with him by car, had killed him, the Italian having first wounded himself fumbling with a revolver. However it may have happened, one comrade had murdered or "done" another. An informal investigation shed no light on the matter and only annoyed the "scientific" illegalists. Since I had expressed hostile opinions towards them, I had an unexpected visit from Raymond. "If you don't want to disappear, be careful about condemning us." He added, laughingly, "Do whatever you like! If you get in my way I'll eliminate you!"

"You and your friends are absolutely cracked," I replied, "and absolutely finished." We faced each other exactly like small boys over a red cabbage. He was still squat and strapping, baby-faced and merry. "Perhaps that's true," he said, "but it's the law of nature."

A positive wave of violence and despair began to grow. The outlaw anarchists shot at the police and blew out their own brains. Others, overpowered before they could fire the last bullet into their own heads, went off sneering to the guillotine. "One against all!" "Nothing means anything to me!" "Damn the masters, damn the slaves, and damn me!" I recognized, in the various newspaper reports, faces I had met or known; I saw the whole of the movement founded by Libertad dragged into the scum of society by a kind of madness; and nobody could do anything about it, least of all myself. The theoreticians, terrified, headed for cover. It was like a collective suicide. The newspapers put out a special edition to announce a particularly daring outrage, committed by bandits in a car on the Rue Ordener in Montmartre, against a bank cashier carrying half a million francs. Reading the descriptions, I recognized Raymond and Octave Garnier, the lad with piercing black eyes who distrusted intellectuals. I guessed the logic of their struggle: in order to save Bonnot, now hunted and trapped, they had to find either money, money to get away from it all, or else a speedy death in this battle against the whole of society. Out of solidarity they rushed into this squalid, doomed struggle with their little revolvers and their petty, trigger-happy arguments. And now there were five of them, lost, and once again without money even to attempt flight, and against them towered Money—100,000 francs' reward for the first informer. They were wandering in the city without escape, ready to be killed somewhere, anywhere, in a tram or a café, content to feel utterly cornered, expendable, alone in defiance of a horrible world. Out of solidarity, simply to share this bitter joy of trying to be killed, without any illusions about the struggle (as a good many told me when I met them in prison afterwards), others joined the first few such as red-haired René (he too was a restless spirit) and poor little André Soudy. I had often met Soudy at public meetings in the Latin Quarter. He was a perfect example of the crushed childhood of the back alleys. He grew up on the pavements: TB at thirteen, VD at eighteen, convicted at

twenty (for stealing a bicycle). I had brought him books and oranges in the Ténon Hospital. Pale, sharp-featured, his accent common, his eyes a gentle gray, he would say, "I'm an unlucky blighter, nothing I can do about it." He earned his living in grocers' shops in the Rue Mouffetard, where the assistants rose at six, arranged the display at seven, and went upstairs to sleep in a garret after 9:00 p.m., dog-tired, having seen their bosses defrauding housewives all day by weighing the beans short, watering the milk, wine, and paraffin, and falsifying the labels... He was sentimental: the laments of street singers moved him to the verge of tears, he could not approach a woman without making a fool of himself, and half a day in the open air of the meadows gave him a lasting dose of intoxication. He experienced a new lease on life if he heard someone call him "comrade" or explain that one could, one must, "become a new man." Back in his shop, he began to give double measures of beans to the housewives, who thought him a little mad. The bitterest joking helped him to live, convinced as he was that he was not long for this world, "seeing the price of medicine."

One morning, a group of enormous police officers burst into our lodgings at the press, revolvers in hand. A bare-footed little girl of seven had opened the door when the bell rang, and was terrified by this irruption of armed giants.[6] Jouin, the Deputy Director of the Sûreté, a thin gentleman with a long, gloomy face, polite and almost likable, came in later, searched the building, and spoke to me amiably of ideas, of Sébastien Faure* whom he admired, of the deplorable way in which the outlaws were discrediting a great ideal.

"Believe me," he sighed, "the world won't change so quickly." He seemed to me neither malicious nor hypocritical, only a deeply distressed man doing a job conscientiously. In the afternoon he sent for me, called me into his office, leant on his elbows under the green lampshade, and talked to me somewhat after this fashion:

"I know you pretty well; I should be most sorry to cause you any trouble—which could be very serious. You know these circles, these men, who are very unlike you, and would shoot you in the back,

6. The police raid took place on December 31, 1911, Victor's twenty-first birthday; the little girl was the daughter of Rirette Maîtrejean.

basically... they are all absolutely finished, I can assure you. Stay here for an hour and we'll discuss them. Nobody will ever know anything of it and I guarantee that there'll be no trouble at all for you."

I was ashamed, unbelievably ashamed, for him, for myself, for everybody, so ashamed that I felt no shock of indignation, nor any fear.

Victor and Rirette at the time of the 1913 trial of the "anarchist bandits"

I told him, "I am sure that you must be embarrassed yourself, talking to me like this."

"But not at all!" All the same, he was doing the dirty job as if overwhelmed by it.

"Go ahead, then!" I said, "arrest me if you think you've got the right to. I only ask one thing: bring me some supper. I am very hungry." The Deputy Director of the Sûreté started up, seemingly relieved.

"Some supper? It's a little late, but I'll see what I can do. Do you have cigarettes?" That was how I entered prison—for a long time. The laws voted in 1893 following Vaillant's* harmless bomb attack, named *Lois scélérates* or "anti-villain laws" by Clemenceau, allowed the arrest of anybody; a ministerial directive had just ordered their application. In a cell of La Santé, behind the Wall, the specially guarded section reserved for men condemned to death, I began to study seriously. The worst of it all was the constant hunger. From a legal point of view I could easily have cleared myself, since the paper's management and editorship was in the name of Rirette, but I was determined to assume full responsibility.

The murders and collective suicide continued. Of these I picked up only distant echoes. In Sénart Forest, five hunted young men, chilled by the mists, violently hijacked an automobile. That same day, in Chantilly, they attacked a branch of the Société Générale. More blood. In Paris itself, Place du Havre, in the middle of the day, the police officer Garnier fell, while handing out a traffic ticket to the pas-

sengers of a gray car, shot through the heart by another Garnier, Octave. Meanwhile the reward of 100,000 francs was burrowing into the brains of certain "conscious egoists," and the arrests began. Bonnot, caught by surprise in a small shop at Ivry, fought in a darkened back room with Jouin, the Deputy Director of the Sûreté, shot him point-blank, pretended momentarily to also be dead, and fled through a window. They caught up with him at Choisy-le-Roi, where he defended himself with a pistol and wrote, in between the shooting, a letter which absolved his comrades of complicity. He lay between two mattresses to protect himself against the final onslaught, and was killed, or else killed himself, no one really knows which. Octave Garnier and René Valet, caught up at Nogent-sur-Marne in a villa where they were hiding out with their women, underwent an even longer siege, taking on the civil police, the *gendarmerie*, and the Zouaves. They fired hundreds of bullets, viewing their attackers as murderers (and themselves as victims) and, when the house was dynamited, blew out their own brains. Rebellion's just another dead end, nothing we can do about it; we may as well hurry up and reload! At heart, they resembled the *dynamiteros* of Spain who stood up in front of tanks shouting *Viva la Fai!*, bidding defiance to the world. Raymond, betrayed by a woman for a considerable sum, was taken by surprise and arrested near the Place Clichy; he thought he loved and was loved in return, for the first time. André Soudy, too, betrayed by an anarchist writer, was arrested at Berck-Plage where he was nursing his tuberculosis. Edouard Carouy, who had no part in these events, was betrayed by the family hiding him and, although armed like the others, was arrested without any attempt at self-defense; this athletic young man was exceptional in being quite incapable of murder, though quite ready to kill himself. The others too were all betrayed. Some of the anarchists shot at those informers, one of whom was killed. Nonetheless, the shrewdest one of them continued

Edouard Carouy

to edit a little individualist journal on the blue cover of which the New Man could be seen struggling up from the shadows.[7]

My examination was short and pointless, since I was actually accused of no offense. The first magistrate who interrogated me for identification purposes, an aging, refined personage, nearly threw a fit of temper as he meditated on my future. "A revolutionary at twenty! Yes—and you will be a plutocrat at forty!" "I do not think so," I replied in all seriousness, and I am still thankful to him for that edifying outburst of anger. I endured the long, enriching experience of cell life, allowed no visits or newspapers, with only the squalid statutory rations (which were picked at by all the thieves on the staff) and some good books. I understood, and ever since have always missed, the old Christian custom of retreats which men spent in monasteries, meditating face-to-face with themselves and with God, in other words with the vast living solitude of the universe. It will be good if that custom is revived, in the time when man can at last devote thought to himself. My solitary confinement was difficult, often more than difficult, suffocating and I was surrounded by awful suffering and I did not escape—did not seek to escape—any of the troubles that could have come my way (except for TB, of which I was afraid), seeking to exhaust them, demanding the greatest efforts of myself. Furthermore, I believe that, however bitter the situation, one ought to go all the way for the sake of the others and for oneself so as to gain from the experience and to grow from it. I also believe that a few very simple rules will suffice for that end: physical and intellectual discipline, exercise (absolutely necessary for the man in a cell), walks for meditation (I did my six miles around the cell every day), intellectual work, and recourse to that exaltation, or light spiritual intoxication, which is provided by great works of poetry. Altogether, I spent around fifteen months in solitary confinement, in various conditions, some of them quite hellish.

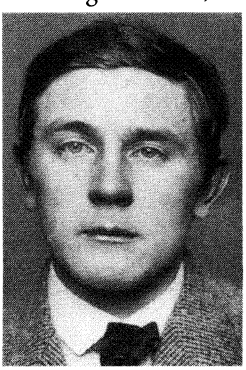
The trial of 1913 assembled on the benches of the Assize Court about twenty prisoners, of whom maybe half a dozen were innocent. In the course of a month, 300 contradictory witnesses paraded before the bar of the court. The inconsequentiality of human testimony is aston-

7. This is probably a reference to André Lorulot.*

ishing. Only one in ten can record more or less clearly what they have seen with any accuracy, observe, and remember—and then be able to recount it, resist the suggestions of the press and the temptations of his own imagination. People see what they want to see, what the press or the questioning suggest. Against the half-dozen main culprits there was no worthwhile evidence since they denied everything. Six witnesses out of forty contradicted each other in their identifications of the most incriminated defendants, but sometimes, in this hotchpotch of confused testimony, a single word would hit the mark and convince the jury. Someone had recalled a word pronounced with a certain accent, a shout of Soudy's ("The man with the rifle") in the middle of a minor street fight: "Come on, fellows, let's blow!" And no further doubt was possible because of the tone, the accent, the slang. It was hardly a piece of scientific evidence, but it was human evidence all the same.

On some days, it became a trial of the police, who were pumping a star witness, an old half-blind, half-deaf peasant woman, to make her identify photographs. The head of the Sûreté, Xavier Guichard, a man of aesthetic pretensions, admitted having hit a woman, shouting at her: "You're young. You can still become a tart! As for your kids, they can go to hell on the Public Assistance!"

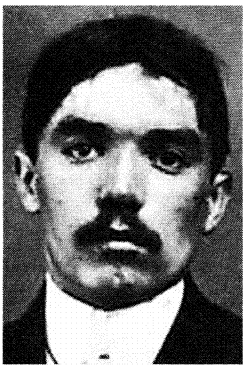
Dr. Paul, an expert in forensic medicine, pomaded, elegant, and somewhat fleshy, lectured on the corpses with visible relish. He had been conducting postmortems on all the murder victims of Paris for the last forty years—after which he would go off to a good lunch, select a tie to wear for tea, and, leaning against the mantelpiece of some drawing room, recount his ten thousand anecdotes of crime. Beaming M. Bertillon, the inventor of anthropometry, modestly admitted that he could be mistaken over fingerprints: there was a probability of error of about one in a billion. The lawyer who, in an attempt to embarrass Bertillon, had elicited this bombshell from him, could not recover from his own confusion.



Raymond ("la Science") Callemin

The principal defendants, Raymond

Callemin, André Soudy, Monier, a gardener, and Eugène Dieudonné,* a joiner, denied everything and, in theory, had a plausible case. In reality, irrefutable signs of guilt were killing them, apart from Dieudonné who was in fact innocent, not of all complicity but of the particular aspect in which he stood accused. His arrest had arisen from a resemblance between his dark eyes and another pair of eyes, still darker, which were in the graveyard. He alone shouted his innocence in frenzy, with no sign of apathy, which made a striking contrast with the real culprits, insolent and jeering, whose whole behavior was a calm challenge: "We dare you to prove it." Since everyone knew the truth, proof was superfluous, as they themselves were aware, but they continued acting after their vocation as desperadoes: smiling, blustering, taking notes. Raymond "denied the right of the court to judge," but weakened in the face of authority, directing little sallies, like a peevish schoolboy, at the President of the court. Soudy, cross-examined as to whether a rifle was his property, replied, "Not mine, but as you know, Proudhon said that property is theft."



Jean de Boë

The prosecution had intended to unearth (for the benefit of the public) an authentically novelettish conspiracy, assigning me to the role of its "theoretician," but had to abandon this project after the second session. I had believed that I would manage to be acquitted, but now understood that in such an atmosphere the acquittal of a young Russian, and a militant at that, was impossible, despite the entire clarity of the facts of the case—for no direct or indirect responsibility for these tragedies could be laid against me. I was there only because of my categorical refusal to talk; that is, to become an informer. I demolished the prosecution's case on various points of detail (which was easy). I defended our principles—of uninhibited analysis, solidarity, and rebellion—(which was much more difficult) and I annoyed the "innocent" culprits by demonstrating that society manufactured crime, criminals, desperate ideas, suicides, and the poison of money.

There were two powerful testimonies: one from the convict Huc, head shaved, dressed in brown overalls, handcuffed, at the witness stand: "I agreed to testify against my mates because I was promised a pardon. I am here to take it back, Your Honor, because I was a coward and I don't want to become scum." And he went back down to his torment. A pretty young female worker, wearing a hat decorated with flowers, came to defend her fiancé, Monier, who was facing the guillotine. He had only kissed her twice, she said, with childish embarrassment: "I swear, he's innocent!" And he really was, but only for her in this world.

Bonds of genuine sympathy were formed between the defendants and their counsel—except for Paul Reynaud, who defended some accessory or other with reasonable skill, but still remained aloof. Moro-Giafferi, leonine in appearance, a Napoleon in a necktie, thundered on behalf of Dieudonné. His grand, arm-waving eloquence, invoking the crucified Christ, the French Revolution, the grief of mothers, the nightmare fears of children, sickened me at first. By the end of twenty minutes of it, I was hypnotized, just like the jury and the gallery, by the power of his astounding rhetoric. A relationship almost of friendliness drew me towards Adad (who committed suicide in Paris some years ago—and what better course was there for an old, penniless lawyer?) and to César Campinchi, a cool, brilliant debater who appealed only to reason, though with a certain irony. I was to see him again much later, seriously wounded in the First World War, and Minister of the Navy in the Second. (One of those who favored resistance to the death, he died under house arrest in Marseilles in 1941, just as I was embarking for America.) I reflected that if these desperadoes had been able, before their struggle, to meet men like this, understanding, cultured, and liberal-minded, both by inclination and profession (perhaps more apparently than really so, but even that would have been enough), they would not have entered upon their paths of darkness. The most immediate cause of their revolt and ruin seemed to me to lie in their isolation from human contacts. They were living in no company but their own, divorced from the world, living in one where they were nearly always subject to some confining and second-rate milieu. What had preserved me from their one-dimensional thinking, from their bitter anger, from their pitiless view of society, had been the fact

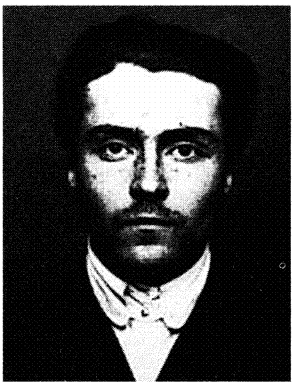
that since childhood I had been exposed to a world full of enduring hope, rich in human values, that of the Russians.

During the trial we were confined in the tiny cells of the Conciergerie, dark holes honeycombed in the ancient stonework of the same buildings where tourists still go to visit the prison of the Girondins and Marie Antoinette's cell. Going to court, we would reassemble, escorted by Gardes Républicains, beneath old archways, which gave us the feeling of being underground. We would walk up a corkscrew staircase inside one of the pointed towers that overlooked the Seine and, passing through a little side door, enter the great courtroom of the Assizes, which would be buzzing with the presence of a crowd. Ladies would come, as if to a show. A fat usher, as much like a pig as a man can possibly be, moved solemnly between the jury, the bench, and the public. The faces of the jury revealed twelve conscientious men in the street who were trying to understand; the bench was composed of short or fat old men, drowsy or shortsighted, dressed in red. Two prosecutors were appearing, the Public Prosecutor and his deputy. The former was measured and of a considerable appearance; the latter was of pedestrian mediocrity, frequently dishonest in his arguments. Séverine, Sébastien Faure, and Pierre Martin (the companion of Kropotkin at the Lyons trial in 1883) appeared in my defense and to defend, on the grounds of the right to asylum, the shopkeeper who had sheltered Bonnot. The last session took twenty hours and the verdict was announced at dawn. We waited for it, sitting together in two anterooms, in a strange atmosphere rather like our old meetings in Montmartre. The usual arguments started all over again. Our lawyers, pale-faced, came to fetch us. Then, the sweltering silent courtroom, and twenty prisoners, tense, erect, and hard-faced. Four death sentences, several condemned to hard labor for life. The only acquittals were for the women, who were in any case innocent, but apart from this Parisian juries were reluctant to find women guilty. (They had acquitted Mme. Steinheil, who was accused of murdering her husband; they acquitted Mme. Joseph Caillaux, wife of the former Prime Minister, who had killed the editor of *Le Figaro*; later they acquitted the anarchist Germaine Berton, who had killed a Royalist leader.)

Dieudonné was condemned to death even though no one doubted

his innocence (which was compromised by his faulty alibis); once more he shouted his guiltlessness and, alone among the accused, seemed on the verge of collapse. Raymond, who had demanded an acquittal, jumped up, his face crimson, and interjected violently: "Dieudonné is innocent—it's me, me that did the shooting!" The President requested him to sit down, for the pleadings were over and confession no longer had any juridical value.

I myself received five years' solitary confinement, but I had managed to get Rirette acquitted; two revolvers discovered on the premises of the paper served to justify my conviction, which was provoked, no doubt, by my calm hostility during the hearings. I found this justice nauseating: it was fundamentally more criminal than the worst criminals. It probably showed: I was just a different sort of enemy from the guilty ones. As I pondered this, the enormity of my sentence did not surprise me. I only wondered if I would be able to live that long, for I was very weak—at any rate physically. I made up my mind to live it out, and was very ashamed to be thinking of myself like this, next to others who...



Serge at the time of his arrest

We said our farewells to one another beneath the high vaults of the Terror. Through a frightful slip, while I was talking to Raymond I used an expression for which I have never forgiven myself. "You live and learn," I remarked, I cannot now say why, perhaps because I had just decided in favor of living. He stared, and then broke into laughter:

"Living is just the problem!"

"Forgive me," I broke out.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Of course, man! My mind's set."

An hour later, in the pale light of morning, I was once again pacing around my suffocating cell. Somebody was sobbing incessantly in the next cell, and it got on my nerves. A little old warder, kindly and sad, came in, averting his face: "Carouy (Edouard) is dying. Can you hear

him?" I could indeed hear a queer panting noise, coming from beyond the sobs next door. "That's him gasping away... He took some poison that he'd got hidden in the soles of his shoes... Well, well, what a life!" He had not been condemned to death but was disgusted with himself and with everything, unjustly linked as a result of circumstances he did not want raised: paying for somebody else.

The obviously innocent Dieudonné was reprieved, in other words given forced labor for life. Strange justice. He, whom I had seen in terror at the idea of death, aging twenty years in a few months, for eighteen years fought fantastically against his servitude, escaping several times, and spending years in solitary confinement. After his final escape he reached Brazil. Through the good offices of Albert Londres,* he was able to return to France. He was never one of the desperate ones; on the contrary, he desperately wanted to live his life without worries.

Raymond was so stolid in the death cell that they did not keep the date of the execution from him. He spent the waiting period in reading. In front of the guillotine he noticed the group of reporters and shouted to them: "A charming sight, isn't it?"

Soudy's last-minute request was for a cup of coffee with cream and some croissants, his last pleasure on earth, appropriate enough for that gray morning when people were happily eating their breakfasts in the little bistros. It must have been too early, for they could only find him a little black coffee. "Out of luck," he remarked, "right to the end." He was fainting with fright and nerves, and had to be supported while he was going down the stairs; but he controlled himself and, when he saw the clearness of the sky over the chestnut trees, hummed a sentimental street song: "Hail, O last morning of mine." Monier, usually taciturn, was crazy with anxiety but mastered himself and became calm. I learned these details only a long time afterwards.

I have not mentioned others whom I only glimpsed among the crowd, like Lacombe the miner who had "executed" a bookseller, and police informer, in an alley in Clichy. He let himself be captured at the gingerbread fair and committed suicide in the Santé Prison by climbing onto the roofs during exercise time. He died at midday precisely, after speaking with his lawyer and the prison governor. He was so determined to die that he dived headfirst onto the ground, reduc-

ing his head to pulp and crushing the vertebrae of his neck. So ended the second explosion of anarchism in France. The first, equally hopeless, was that of 1891–94, signaled by the outrages of Ravachol,* Émile Henry, Vaillant, and Caserio.* The same psychological features and the same social factors were present in both phases, the same exacting idealism, in the breasts of uncomplicated men whose energy could find no outlet in achieving a higher dignity or sensibility, because any such outlet was physically denied to them. Conscious of their frustration, they battled like madmen and were beaten down. In those times the world was an integrated structure, so stable in appearance that no possibility of substantial change was visible within it. As it progressed up and up, and on and on, masses of people who lay in its path were all the while being crushed. The harsh condition of the workers improved only very slowly, and for the vast majority of the proletariat there was no way out. The declassed elements on the proletarian fringe found all roads barred to them except those that led to squalor and degradation. Above the heads of these masses, wealth accumulated, insolent and proud. The consequences of this situation arose inexorably: crime, class struggles and their trail of bloody strikes, and frenzied battles of One against All. These struggles also testified to the failure of an ideology. Between the copious theorizing of Peter Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus, and the rage of Albert Libertad, the collapse of anarchism in the bourgeois jungle was now obvious. Kropotkin had grown up in a completely different Europe, one less stable, where the ideal of liberty seemed to have some future and people believed in revolution and education. Reclus had fought for the Commune; the confidence inspired by the greatness of its thwarted vision had lasted him for the rest of his days; he believed in the saving power of science. On the eve of war in Europe, science was functioning solely to assist the progress of a traditionalist and barbaric social order. One felt the approach of an era of violence: inescapable.

In other lands, namely Poland and Russia, the revolutionary movement confronted regimes of a mongrel character, half-absolutist and half-capitalist: there the movement was able to concentrate these diffuse energies and channel them along ways of sacrifice, at the end of which lay victories that were not only possible but popularly desired.

The men, the situations, and the conflicts were almost the same, only with a historical complexion different from that in France, the "Rentier State" as Yves Guyot* put it. In Poland, Joseph Pilsudski's Socialist Party (PPS) was raiding Treasury vans and tax offices, attacking governors and policemen. In Russia, the Social-Revolutionary Party was conducting a similar campaign, and the combat groups of the Bolshevik* faction of Social-Democrats—including the extraordinary terrorist Kamo,* the intellectual and laboratory-maker Krassin,* the skillful organizer Koba-Stalin, the man of action Tsintsadze, and the courier Litvinov—were conducting the struggle for the Party's income on the highways, the public places of Tiflis, and the ships of Baku, bomb and revolver in hand. In Italy, in *Pagine Libere* (1 January 1911), a young Socialist agitator, Benito Mussolini, was chanting the praises of the anarchist desperadoes.

Of this hard childhood, this troubled adolescence, all those terrible years, I regret nothing as far as I myself am concerned. I am sorry for those who grow up in this world without ever experiencing the cruel side of it, without knowing utter frustration and the necessity of fighting, however blindly, for mankind. Any regret I have is only for the energies wasted in struggles that were bound to be fruitless. These struggles have taught me that, in any man, the best and the worst live side by side, and sometimes mingle—and that what is worst comes through the corruption of what is best.

2.
LIVE TO PREVAIL
1912–1919

THE OUTSIDERS were at the lowest and most bitter ebb of defeat. Perhaps I was the only one aware of it in prison, because I never met anyone else who felt it as clearly. Nevertheless, it was true and he who becomes aware of it, alone, becomes aware of it for the others, too. I feel an aversion to using "I" as a vain affirmation of the self, containing a good dose of illusion and another of vanity or arrogance. Whenever possible, that is to say whenever I am not feeling isolated, when my experience highlights in some way or other that of people with whom I feel linked, I prefer to employ the pronoun "we," which is truer and more general. We never live only by our own efforts, we never live only for ourselves; our most intimate, our most personal thinking is connected by a thousand links with that of the world.

You never depend only on yourself, you never live only for yourself, and you have to realize that our most intimate thought, that we most own, is bound by a thousand bonds to that of the world. And he who speaks, he who writes is essentially someone speaking for all those who are voiceless. Only, each of us has to come to terms with his own problem. I understood pretty clearly the defeat of anarchism, altogether clearly the individualists' aberrations—but I could see no way out.

Of prison I shall say here only a little. It burdened me with an experience so heavy, so intolerable to endure, that long afterwards, when I resumed writing, my first book (a novel) amounted to an effort to free myself from this inward nightmare, as well as performing a duty towards all those who will never so free themselves (*Men in Prison*). It is reasonably well known in France and the Spanish-speaking countries. In the jail where I did the most time, there were three or four

hundred of us in torment, mostly doing long sentences between eight years and life. Among these men I encountered the same proportions of weak spirits, human scum, average types, and exceptional men, gifted with some spark of divinity, as anywhere else. Generally speaking, with only a few exceptions, the warders, of whatever grade, were on a much lower level. They were criminals, obviously so in their own way, protected by a guaranteed immunity from punishment and pension at the end of their unspeakable lives. They included sadists, inflexible hypocrites, morons, racketeers, scroungers, and thieves; and, incredible as it may seem, some who were good and almost intelligent.

The French prison itself, organized as it is according to ancient regulations, is nothing but an absurd machine for breaking those men who are thrown into it. Life there is a kind of mechanized madness; everything in it seems to have been conceived in a spirit of mean calculation how best to enfeeble, stupefy, and numb the prisoner, and poison him with an inexpressible bitterness; his return to normal life must evidently be made quite impossible. This end is attained by an organization impregnated with the penal traditions of the prerevolutionary order, with the religious idea of chastisement (an idea which now, lacking any basis in faith, is only a psychological justification for social sadism), and with the footling detail of our vast modern administrations. The hotchpotch mixing of malefactors, semi-lunatics, and victims of all descriptions; undernourishment; the rule of complete and perpetual silence imposed at every moment upon all common activity; arbitrary punishments designed to humiliate, torture, and weaken; prohibition of any knowledge whatsoever concerning life outside, even if it be war, invasion, or national peril; the maximum possible deprivation of intellectual exercise, prohibition of study, even of reading more than one book a week, to be chosen from the idiotic novelettes of the prison library (fortunately it also contained Balzac). In the long run this treadmill turns out sexual inverts, cracked brains, worthless and depraved beings incapable of rehabilitation, dedicated in short to joining the ranks of tramps in La Maub, or else parasitical toughs, hardened by suffering, who keep up their own special tradition. Cynics, but loyal to one another, such men preserve their "emancipated" dignity with no illusions about either society or themselves.

From this class professional criminals are recruited. The fact that nobody in more than a century has considered the problem of criminality and prisons; the fact that, since Victor Hugo, nobody has raised the matter reveals the power of inertia in our society. This machine whose function is to turn out felons and human refuse is expensive without fulfilling any useful purpose. Yet in itself, and even in its architecture, it attains a sort of perfection.

Truly wonderful was the struggle waged by some there, a pitiful minority, to preserve their capacity for living. I was very definitely one of these. For this purpose a considerable degree of a particular kind of willpower was necessary: passive to all appearance, yet artful and incorrigible. When we saw the "new ones" arrive, we knew which of them, whether young or old, were not going to live. We were never wrong in these forecasts, but they had been wrong about me; I had appeared fated to die before long. A former budding lawyer of the Parisian bar, the victim of a shocking tragedy of middle-class life now serving a life sentence, had managed, with the aid of corruption, to found an efficiently concealed clandestine library of good scientific and philosophical works. His friendship and this precious food of the spirit was, I know, my salvation. In the poky, solitary cell in which each of us slept, whose window faced the sky, I was able to read only for a few moments in the morning, and for a few more in the evening. During my compulsory labor in the printshop, I used to set up notes and comments in galley form for certain comrades to read. From the moment that thought and learning were possible for us, life was also possible, and worthwhile. The keen edge of this slow torture blunted itself against us, against myself especially. I was confident of beating the treadmill.

The outbreak of war was sudden, like an unexpected storm in a season of clear weather. We had not been able to observe its early symptoms, but knew of it through the unaccustomed panic that seized the warders (since many of them were liable to be called up). And this storm interpreted the world to us. For me, it heralded another, purifying tempest: the Russian Revolution. Revolutionaries knew quite well that the autocratic Empire, with its hangmen, its pogroms, its finery, its famines, its Siberian jails and ancient iniquity,

could never survive the war. A gleam of light was visible at last: this would be the beginning of everything, the prodigious first day of Creation. An end to deadlock! This huge gateway would be open towards the future. No more problems now about the aims of the struggle or the rules of life, for the Russian Revolution was calling from the heart of the future.

For the time being, the sudden conversion to fratricidal patriotism of the German Social-Democrats and the French syndicalists, Socialists, and anarchists was incomprehensible to us. Did they then believe nothing of what they preached yesterday? Had we been right after all in refusing to trust them? Passionate singings of the "Marseillaise," from crowds seeing troops off to the train, drifted across even to our jail. We could also hear shouts of "*To Berlin! To Berlin!*" This lunacy, which we could not explain, was the peak and climax of a permanent social crisis. At the risk of spending between sixty and eighty hours in the dungeons, with consequently almost certain death from tuberculosis, the half-dozen of us comrades who were scattered around the central prison carried on a feverish exchange of theses. Gustave Hervé, who a while before was proclaiming insurrection against war, was now demanding to be enlisted in the army; his *Guerre Sociale* changed its title to *La Victoire.* They were tricksters, nothing more: "It's not the weathercock that's moving, it's the wind." Fundamentally, the crowds were being swept along by an immense ignorance of the reality of modern war, whose existence had been forgotten since 1870. The infantrymen went off to the front line in their scarlet trousers, and the cadets of St. Cyr in their white gloves and plumed *kepis*, just as though it were a parade. Over the whole of Europe, the masses were letting their suppressed energies run free. France forgot the disparity of forces whereby her thirty-eight million inhabitants, with a low birth rate, engaged in mortal struggle against a fecund Germany of sixty million.

Our opposition to the war was essentially a matter of human feeling. The two coalitions had practically the same social organization: republics based on high finance, more or less monarchical but governed, with the sole exception of Russia, by bourgeois parliaments. On our side and on theirs, the same liberties equally stifled by exploi-

tation, the same slow progress that crushed human beings. German militarism was a hideous peril, but we foresaw that an Allied victory would establish over the Continent a French militarism whose capacity for reactionary idiocy was revealed in the Dreyfus affair (not to mention General Galliffet,* of bloody memory). The invasion of Belgium was abominable, but the memory of the obliteration of the two little South African Republics by British arms in 1902 was still fresh in our minds. The recent conflicts over Tripolitania and Morocco showed that butchery was being unleashed over Europe in the cause of a redivision of colonies. The prospect of victory by either side appalled us. How was it that among so many victims, no men were to be found brave enough to rush across from either "enemy" side and hail one another as brothers? In asking each other that question we experienced a new despair.

Without our knowing anything of it, the line of invasion rolled towards Paris. If we had been outside jail, I think that we would have followed the stream and felt immediately that, despite all theoretical considerations, a country under attack, unless it is at the height of a social crisis, must defend itself; primitive reflexes, infinitely stronger than principles, are at play; the sentiment of "the nation in danger" prevails.

The prison is situated on an island in the Seine, twenty-five miles or so from the Marne. While the battle of the Marne was on, the population of Melun began to flee. No one believed in victory any longer, and Paris seemed lost. We learned that the prison would not be evacuated and that the fighting would probably reach the banks of the Seine. We would find ourselves cooped inside this cage, right in the middle of a battlefield. Warders and prisoners alike were sick with fear. I was not. On the contrary, I felt an ecstatic happiness at the thought that the cannonades would destroy this preposterous treadmill, even if we were entombed under the rubble as a result. The fighting moved away, and everything went on exactly as before.

There were plenty of deaths in the jail. I saw young men gripped, three months before their release was due, with a kind of fever, losing their biological adaptation to the prison environment, awakening once more, eyes glittering, to some sort of life, and then suddenly

dying in three days as though from an inner convulsion. I myself collapsed from undernourishment after six or eight months; I could no longer remain standing, and was admitted to the infirmary where broth and milk set me back on my feet within a fortnight. Then my sickness started again. On the first occasion I was afraid that I might be bound for the little reserved cemetery nearby, thereby giving the convict in charge of grave-digging his little walk in the open air and his customary quart of wine (his rewarding position was a source of envy to us). Then I adapted myself, and made up my mind to survive. From beyond my conscious will I could feel another will, deeper and more powerful, asserting itself within me. Here I must mention a great conservative doctor whose kindness resulted in my obtaining several rest periods: Dr. Maurice de Fleury.

There came a certain winter dawn that arose over the Seine, over the tall poplars that I loved, over the sleeping, shabby little town where the only faces that passed by at this hour were humble, hardened, and topped by helmets. I departed, alone, amazingly light-footed upon the ground, taking nothing with me, without any real joy, obsessed by the idea that, behind me, the treadmill was continuing endlessly to turn, crushing human beings. In the gray morning, I bought a cup of coffee in the station café. The proprietor came up to me with a kind of sympathy.

"Out of jail?"

"Yes."

He wagged his head. Might he be interested in "my crime," or my future? He leant over: "You in a hurry? There's one hell of a brothel near here . . ."

The first man I had met, in the mist of a gloomy bridge, had been a soldier with a mutilated face; this fat procurer was the second. Was it always to be the world-without-escape? What good was the war doing? Had the dance of death taught nothing to anyone?

Paris was leading a double life. Walking along, spellbound, I stopped in front of the lowly windows of the Belleville shops. The colors of the darning wools were a wonder, the mother-of-pearl penknives enthralled me, and for several minutes I contemplated the picture postcards of soldiers and their fiancées sending each other

kisses through a messenger-dove, holding an envelope in its beak. Men and women passing by—how astonishingly real! A cat, sitting comfortably on the hot window ledge of a bakery, with the smell of warm bread escaping outside! I smiled at it drunkenly. Belleville was the same, only sadder and poorer. "Funerals in twenty-four hours, moderate prices, payment by installments..." A marble cutter was displaying his enamel plaques; all of them represented young soldiers. Housewives in shawls were coming from the town hall, each bringing her sack of potatoes and her bucket of coal. The gray façades of the Rue Julien Lacroix oozed out their ancient misery in the cold.

People explained life to me: "You know, it's almost a merry life. Every house has several dead, but the men have been away for so long that their wives are living with other men. There's no unemployment, there's a craze on for foreign labor, wages are high... There's heaps of soldiers from every country in the world. Some of them have money, the English and the Canadians; there's never been so much lovemaking in all the odd corners. Pigalle, Clichy, the Montmartre district, the fine boulevards, all those parasites are amusing themselves: after us, the deluge! The war's business, old chap. You'll see people are doing well out of it, nobody wants it to end anymore. The troops are fed up, of course, but the lads home on leave are showing off. 'Nothing to do about it, don't bother to try understanding it,' that's what they say. Almereyda's running a daily paper in the smart end of town, he has two cars and a big house... Jules Guesde and Marcel Sembat* are in the Government; a Socialist is defending Jaurès's murderer—Maître Zévaès, you know him. So-and-so, the Illegalist, has won the Military Medal. Kropotkin has signed an appeal for the war effort, along with Jean Grave. What's-his-name is in the munitions business... What's that you say? The Russian Revolution? Poor old chap, you haven't a clue. The Russians are solid out there in the Carpathians and, believe me, all that's not about to change. Only one thing to do: feather your own nest. It's a lot easier than before the war."

That was the sort of talk I heard. I watched the skinny Algerians sluggishly sweeping the muck in the streets, and it never stopped, the muck actually grew. Shivering Indo-Chinese, in helmets and sheepskin, guarded the Prefecture and La Santé. The Métro was carting

around its dense crowds, couple upon couple, convalescents lived out their boredom at hospital windows, a disfigured soldier hugged the waist of a working girl under the bare trees of the Luxembourg Gardens, and the cafés were crowded. The outskirts rotted in deep darkness, but the center of town, dotted with illuminations, throbbed on well into the night. "Nowadays, see, there are only two poles to the world, love and money—and money comes first."

I made inquiries about the Russians. The terrorist Savinkov* was recruiting for the Foreign Legion. A number of Bolsheviks had been killed at the front, as volunteers. Plekhanov was advocating the defense of the Empire. Trotsky,* escorted to the Spanish frontier by two police inspectors, was about to be interned somewhere in America. Almereyda, in his combined office, flat, and private empire in the smart boulevards, more elegant, more of a Rastignac than ever, told me that he had given up tracking down police spies in the working-class movement: "There are too many of them!" It might do more harm than good. The war was leading nowhere; he was working for peace; its supporters were growing and held the future in their hands. "Poincaré and Joffre are finished... Soon everything's going to change here."

Certain people were harsh towards him: "He's sold out to a bankers' clique; he's got the Chief of Police in his pocket." Maître César Campinchi explained to me that France had been bled white, but would win in a year or two, with the Americans on her side. Dr. Maurice de Fleury would ask me if my ideas had changed and my replies would make him shake his head, that handsome, meditative head of a retired officer. I went to see a performance of Maeterlinck's *Bluebird*: in the theater, couples, couples and uniforms... Everything reinforced the mad sensation that we were falling into the abyss. "Péguy* is dead! Riciotto Canudo (a young writer we liked) is dead. Gabriel-Tristan Franconi (poet and friend) was decapitated by a shell. Jean-Marie Bernard is dead. The brothers Duneff, who had written the tragic life of the workers, are dead..."

Paris, farewell! I took the Barcelona express. The trains and the railway stations unveiled another face to the war: the soldiers. They were toughness itself, rough-hewn, stiff, and uncomplicated as a mass of stone: ravaged. Beyond the Pyrenees, vistas of peace and abundance

opened anew, with no wounded invalids, no soldiers on leave counting up the hours, no funeral black, no frenzy for life on the eve of death. In the little villages of Catalonia the squares, lined with tall trees and fringed by little cafés under the arcades, breathed an air of nonchalance. Barcelona was making merry, with its Ramblas* illuminated at night and luxuriously sunlit by day, full of birds and women. Here too the cornucopia of the war was gushing away. Both for the Allies and for the Central Powers, the factories were working full blast and the companies were positively coining gold. Zest for life shining at you from faces and shop windows, oozing at you from banking houses, smacking you on the back. Everything was going mad.

I underwent a phase of intense wretchedness. The treadmill that crushed human beings still revolved inside me. I found no happiness in awakening to life, free and privileged alone among my conscript generation, in this contented city. I felt a vague compunction at it all. Why was I there, in these cafés, on these golden sands, while so many others were bleeding in the trenches of a whole continent? How was I worth more than they? Why was I excluded from the common fate? I came across deserters who were happy to be beyond the frontier, safe at last. I admitted their right to safety, but inwardly I was horrified at the idea that people could fight so fiercely for their own lives when what was at stake was the life of everyone: a limitless suffering to be endured commonly, shared and drunk to the last drop. This feeling was in sharp opposition to my reasoned thought, but much stronger. I can see now that this need for sharing in the common fate has always held me, and has been one of my deepest sources of action. I worked in printshops, went to bullfights, resumed my reading, clambered up mountains, dallied in cafés to watch Castilian, Sevillan, Andalusian, or Catalan girls at their dancing, and I felt that it would be impossible for me to live like this. All I could think of was the men at war, who kept calling to me.

It is certain that I would have finally enlisted in some army or other, if certain long-awaited events had not at last been simultaneously set in motion.

In *Tierra y Libertad* I wrote my first article under the name of "Victor Serge," in defense of Friedrich Adler,* who had just been

condemned to death in Vienna: a few months before he had assassinated Count Stürgkh, one of the politicians responsible for the war. My next article was on the fall of the Russian autocracy. Then, awaited so keenly that we eventually wondered whether we should still believe in it, the Revolution appeared, and the improbable became reality. Reading the dispatches from Russia, we were transfigured, for the images that they conveyed were simple, concrete. Things suddenly appeared in their true light; the world was no longer impelled along by helpless lunacy. Certain French Individualists mocked me with their store of cynical stock phrases: "Revolutions are useless. They will not change human nature. Afterwards reaction sets in and everything starts all over again. I've only got my own skin; I'm not marching for wars or for revolutions, thank you."

"In fact," I would answer them, "you people are no longer good for anything. You're at the end of your tether: you won't march for anything anymore—because you yourselves are not worth marching for... Your kind are the products of the degeneration of everything: of the bourgeoisie, of bourgeois ideas, of the working-class movement, of anarchism..."

My break with these "comrades," who were no more than the shadows of comrades, became complete: it was useless to argue, and difficult to endure one another. The Spaniards, even the workers on the shop floor beside me, who were no militants, instinctively understood the Petrograd days, since their imagination transposed those events to Madrid and Barcelona. The monarchy of Alfonso XIII was no more popular or stable than that of Nicholas II. The revolutionary tradition of Spain, like that of Russia, went back to the time of Bakunin.* Similar social causes were operating in both countries: agrarian problems, retarded industrialization, a political regime at least a century and a half behind Western Europe. The wartime industrial and commercial boom strengthened the bourgeoisie, especially that of Catalonia, which was hostile to the old landowning aristocracy and to the utterly hidebound royal administration; it also expanded the energies and appetites of a young proletariat which had had no time to form a working-class aristocracy, that is, to become bourgeoisified. Knowledge of the war aroused a disposition towards violence, and the low wages (I earned

four pesetas a day, about eighty American cents) stimulated the workers to press their immediate demands.

From one week to another the horizon became visibly clearer. Within three months the mood of the Barcelona working class was transformed. Their fighting spirit mounted. The CNT* gathered strength. I belonged to a tiny trade union in the printshop. Without any increase in the number of activists (there must have been about thirty of us), its influence advanced to such an extent that the whole body of workers seemed to have woken up. Three months after the news of the Russian Revolution, the Comité Obrero began to prepare a revolutionary general strike, entered negotiations for a political alliance with the Catalan liberal bourgeoisie, and calmly planned the overthrow of the monarchy. The Comité Obrero's program of demands, drawn up in June 1917 and published in *Solidaridad Obrera,* was borrowed from the accumulated experience of the Russian Soviets. I was soon to discover that in France too, the same high-voltage current was crossing from the trenches to the factories, the same violent hopes were coming to birth.

At the Café Espagnol, on the Paralelo, that crowded thoroughfare with its blazing lights of evening, near the horrible *barrio chino* whose moldering alleys were full of half-naked girls lurking in doorways that gaped into hellholes—it was here that I met militants arming for the approaching battle. They spoke enthusiastically of those who would fall in that fight, they dealt out Browning revolvers, and baited, as we all did, the anxious spies at the neighboring table. In a revolutionary side street, with a Guardia Civil barracks on one side and poor tenements on the other, I found Barcelona's hero of the hour, the quickening spirit, the uncrowned leader, the fearless man of politics who distrusted politicians: Salvador Seguí,* affectionately nicknamed "*Nay del Sucre.*" We used to dine together in the faint flicker of a paraffin lamp. The meal, set on the table of smooth wood, would consist of tomatoes, onions, coarse red wine, and a country-style soup. The child's underclothes would be hanging on a line of string and Teresita would be nursing the baby. The balcony let onto the menacing darkness outside, on the barracks packed with killers, on the red, starry halo of the Rambla. There, we examined the various problems: the

Russian Revolution, the coming general strike, alliance with the Catalan liberals, the trade unions, the ingrained anarchist hostility to any fresh forms of organization. As to the Russian Revolution, I was certain only on one point: that it would not stop halfway. The avalanche would carry on rolling right to the end. What end? "The peasants will seize the land, and the workers the factories. After that, I don't know."

I wrote: "After that, struggles devoid of any greatness will begin once again, but on a rejuvenated soil. Mankind will have made a great leap forward." The Comité Obrero did not ask itself any fundamental questions. It entered the battle without knowing its ultimate perspective or assessing the consequences of its action; and, of course, it could hardly do otherwise. The Committee was the expression of an expanding power that could not remain inactive; nor, any longer, could it simply be beaten down, even if it fought badly. The notion of seizing Barcelona was straightforward: it was studied in detail. But Madrid? The other regions? Liaison with the rest of Spain was weak. Would it lead to the overthrow of the monarchy? Some of the Republicans who hoped for this, including Lerroux (still popular, though already discredited on the Left), wanted to throw libertarian Barcelona into the front line, with the way open for themselves to retreat if Barcelona was defeated. The Catalan Republicans associated with Marcelino Domingo were leaning on the power of the workers only to wrest a degree of autonomy from the monarchy, and kept tantalizing the Government with the threat of disorders. Together with Seguí, I followed the negotiations between the Catalan liberal bourgeoisie and the Comité Obrero. It was a dubious alliance, in which the partners feared, justifiably mistrusted, and subtly outmaneuvered one another.

Seguí summed up the position: "They would like to use us and then do us down. For the moment, we are useful in their game of political blackmail. Without us they can do nothing: we have the streets, the shock troops, the brave hearts among the people. We know this, but we need them. They stand for money, trade, possible legality (at the beginning, anyway), the press, public opinion, etc."

"But," I would reply, "unless we have a brilliant victory, which I don't believe, they are ready to desert us at the first obstacle. We are betrayed in advance."

Seguí could see the dangers, but he was still optimistic: "If we are beaten, they will be beaten with us—too late then to betray us. If we win, we, not they, will be the masters of the situation." It was Salvador Seguí who gave me the inspiration for the character of Dario in *Birth of Our Power.* A worker, and usually dressed like a worker coming home from the job, cloth cap squashed down on his skull, shirt collar unbuttoned under his cheap tie; tall, strapping, round-headed, his features rough, his eyes big, shrewd, and sly under heavy lids, of an ordinary degree of ugliness, but intensely charming to meet and with his whole self displaying an energy that was lithe and dogged, practical, intelligent, and without the slightest affectation. To the Spanish working-class movement he brought a new role: that of the superb organizer. He was no anarchist, but rather a libertarian, quick to scoff at resolutions on "harmonious life under the sun of liberty," "the blossoming of the self," or "the future society"; he posed instead the immediate problems of wages, organization, rents, and revolutionary power. And that was his tragedy: he could not allow himself to raise aloud this central problem, that of power. I think we were the only ones to discuss it in private. When he asserted "We can take the city," I would ask, "How would we govern it?" The only example we had till then was that of the Paris Commune, which, looked at closely, was not very encouraging: indecision, rifts, empty chatter, personality clashes between nonentities... The Commune, just like the Spanish Revolution later, threw up heroes by the thousand, admirable martyrs by the hundreds, but it had no head. I thought about this often as it seemed to me that we were heading towards a Barcelona Commune. The masses, overflowing with energy, moved by a muddled idealism, lots of middle-level leaders—and no head, "except for yours, Salvador, and one head is much too fragile," especially one not that sure of itself nor of being followed. The anarchists would not hear any talk of the seizure of power. They refused to see that if the Comité Obrero were victorious, it would be the Catalan government of tomorrow. Seguí saw this, but, afraid of starting a clash of ideas that would have isolated him, dared not talk of it. And so we went into battle, as it were in the dark.

Our enthusiasm and strength were gathering for the great day, and

the preparations for it were almost ready. Towards the middle of July, squads of blue-overalled militants patrolled the town, hands on their revolvers. I went on these patrols, and we used to pass the Guardia Civil on horseback with their black cocked hats and their bearded faces. They knew that we were tomorrow's insurgents, but they had orders not to engage with us. The authorities had lost their wits, or else anticipated what was going to happen: the defection of the Catalan Parliamentary democrats. The building of La Calle de las Egypcias, where I happened to be one day with Seguí, was surrounded by the black-hats; we helped Seguí to escape over the flat roofs on the housetops. I was arrested, and spent three hateful hours in a tiny police cell painted in red ocher. I could hear the roar of the riots on the Rambla nearby, a roar so loud that a kindly old police officer released me with his apologies. The plainclothesmen at our heels, distressingly courteous, assured us of their sympathy and apologized for pursuing so disgraceful a trade to earn their children's bread.

I doubted if we would win, but I would gladly have fought for the future's sake. Much later, in a "Meditation on the conquest of power," I wrote:

> Very likely, Dario, at the end of all this trouble we shall be shot. I have doubts about today and about ourselves. Yesterday, you were bearing loads in the harbor bent under the weight of your burden, stepping lightly on the springy gangway between the quay and the ship's hold; as for me, I was bearing chains. A figure of speech, Dario, for now we only bear an identity number, which is just as heavy. Our old friend Ribas from the committee used to sell detachable collars in Valencia. Portez spent his days at the power mills breaking stones or drilling holes in metal cogwheels. What did Miro do with his muscles and suppleness of a cat? He oiled cars in Garcias's cellar. In reality, we're slaves. Will we take this city?—just look at it, this fabulous city, look at its lights, its torches, listen to its magnificent sound: cars, trams, music, voices, songs, birdsongs and the steps, the steps and indiscernible rustle of fabrics and silks—take the city with these hands, our hands, is it possible? You would laugh,

> Dario, if I said this out loud. You would say, spreading out your great, strong, hairy, brotherly hands: "Me, I feel able to win all the way. All the way." That is how we all feel, immortal, right up to the moment when we feel nothing anymore. And life goes on after our little drop of water has flowed back into the ocean. In this sense my confidence is one with yours. Tomorrow is great. We will not have prepared this conquest in vain. This city will be won, if not by our hands, at least by hands like ours, only stronger: perhaps stronger by being better toughened through our very weakness. If we are beaten, other men, infinitely different from us, infinitely like us, will come down this Rambla on an evening like this, in ten years, twenty years, it matters not, planning this same conquest; perhaps they will be thinking of the blood we have shed. Even now I think I can see them. I am thinking of their blood, which will also flow. But they will win the city.[1]

I was right. Those others did win the city, on 19 July 1936. They were called Ascaso,* Durruti,* Germinal Vidal,* the CNT, the FAI, the POUM.* But on 19 July 1917 we were beaten almost without a fight, since the Catalan liberals took fright at the last minute and refused to join the struggle. We fought alone, in a day of sunshine and shouting, of impetuous crowds and chases in the streets, while the cautious black-hats charged lazily and pursued us without enthusiasm: they were afraid.

The Comité Obrero sounded the retreat. Around noon I joined the multitude of comrades in the cramped Conde del Asalto hall. While we were awaiting instructions, the Guardia Civil, rifles raised, suddenly burst in from the Rambla and advanced on us, slowly herding us back. A small, sickly officer shouted that he would give the order to fire if we did not disperse. It was impossible for us to disperse, for behind us was another crowd—and we had no inclination to do so. A gap opened between us and this wall of men aiming at us with their rifles. Into it there suddenly leapt a young man in gray, his hand

1. Serge is quoting from his 1930 novel, *Birth of Our Power.*

balancing a bomb wrapped in newspaper. He shouted, "I am a free man! Sons of whores!" I rushed towards him and grabbed his wrists: "Are you mad? You're going to start a useless slaughter." We wrestled for a brief moment, while the police were motionless and hesitant, then some of the comrades surrounded us and dragged us away... Isolated shots cracked out. In a doorway the young man, still shaking with exasperation, was wiping his forehead with his hand. "You're the Russian, aren't you? Lucky I recognized you in time."

In the evening, Seguí returned, worn out with fatigue. "Cowards, cowards!" he kept whispering. I was never to see him again, for he went into hiding to organize the August rebellion. In 1921, when I was in Petrograd, I had a letter from him with the news that he was coming to Russia. He had become Barcelona's unchallenged tribune, and was returning from Minorca where he had been for some time under sentence of deportation. At the beginning of 1923 he was killed in the street, a few yards from the Rambla, by the *pistoleros* of the employers' agency Sindicato Libre.

The rebellion broke out in August 1917, resulted in a hundred-odd corpses on all sides, and was crushed, without, however, blocking the progress of the Barcelona working class. I was on my way to Russia. The defeat of 19 July had made up my mind for me: I had lost all hope of victory hereabouts, I was weary of discussions with militants who often seemed to me no more than great big children. The Russian Consul General in Barcelona, a Prince K——, received me at once when my name was sent in: "How can I be of service to you?" This gentleman had just given his allegiance to the Provisional Government. I had previously been a little afraid of him, for any Russian revolutionaries of whose presence in the city he became aware were arrested by the Commandant at his instigation. Now all was sweetness. I asked him only for a recruiting form, so that I could go and do my military service in liberated Russia. "But of course, with pleasure! At once!" We each understood what the other left half-said.

Paris. The Russian military headquarters in the Avenue Rapp was full of dapper officers, quite at home in the new situation: republicans within the week, and good republicans of course. Exceedingly polite, they enumerated all the difficulties to me and other callers. Commu-

nications with Russia were clogged with all kinds of obstacles. Why not, they suggested, serve our rediscovered country in the Russian formation fighting in France? That would be easy to arrange. I replied to the Captain, "But don't you think, Sir, that the Russian troops in France, recruited under a despotic regime, should be repatriated to allow them to breathe the air of the new Russia?" He assured me that our soldiers in the camp of Mailly and at the front in Champagne were kept fully informed about the changes taking place in Russia by their superior officers. Complete mystification between us, and no point insisting; nothing to be gained from these handsome officers. However, I continued my efforts, only to learn at last that, as it appeared, the British Admiralty was refusing transit to the group of returning revolutionaries of which I was a member. We kept sending telegrams to the Petrograd Soviet and Kerensky,* which made a deplorable impression, and it was not concealed from us that, what with one censorship and another, it was by no means certain that our telegrams were arriving. Meanwhile, a Russian division, demanding repatriation, mutinied at the La Courtine camp; it was crushed by cannon fire. Comrades returning to Paris from the front advised me to join a different division, which was due to be repatriated, and I made a formal application. On receiving it, the General informed me regretfully that the list for volunteers was full. I had the idea of getting over there via the Foreign Legion, which was promising incorporation in the Russian army to its Russian volunteers, but then I found that most of the comrades who had tried this route had met a hero's death in the front line, while their elected representatives were taken behind the lines and shot.

In the anterooms of the military mission I made the acquaintance of a Russian soldier, about thirty, lately from Transjordania where he had fought in the British forces. Like me he was trying to return, though for different reasons, and he got his way before I did. He defined his position right from our first conversation: "I am a traditionalist, monarchist, imperialist, and pan-Slavist. Mine is the true Russian nature, just as it was formed by Orthodox Christianity. You also have the true Russian nature, but at its opposite extreme, that of spontaneous anarchy, primitive violence, and unruly beliefs. I love all of Russia, even what I want to fight in it, even what you represent . . ."

On these subjects we had excellent discussions, in our walks up and down the esplanade of Les Invalides. At least he was frank, daring in thought, tremendously in love with adventure and battle, and from time to time he would recite verses with magical effect. He was rather lean and singularly ugly: his face too long, heavy lips and nose, conical forehead, weird eyes, bluish-green and overlarge, like a fish or Oriental idol—and indeed, he was very fond of the priestly statues of Assyria, which everyone came to think he resembled. This was one of the greatest Russian poets of our generation, already famous: Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilev.* We were destined to meet several times in Russia, antagonists but friends. In 1921 I was to struggle vainly for several days, trying to stop the Cheka* from shooting him. But of this approaching future we had no foreknowledge.

The Russian officers usually identified themselves as Social-Revolutionaries, and the fact is that the Social-Revolutionary Party was visibly inflated, like the frog in the fable, with no doubts at all that it would have the majority in the forthcoming Constituent Assembly.* I knew only very little about Bolshevism, the very mention of which set the splendid officers foaming at the mouth. Its strength was being proved in the July troubles in Petrograd. The critical question that was put to everyone, including myself, was, all the time: "For or against Bolshevism? For or against the Constituent Assembly?" To this I would reply as I was wont, rashly and frankly: the Russian Revolution cannot confine itself to changing the political order; it is, and must be, of a social character. In other words, the peasants are bound to seize the land, and will take it from the landlords, with or without uprisings, with or without the permission of a Constituent Assembly; the workers will insist on the nationalization or at the very least the control of large-scale industry and the banks. They did not kick out the Romanovs just to go back to their workshops as powerless as yesterday or to help the cannon-kings grow rich. This, for me, was a self-evident truth, but I saw very soon that although I confined myself to proclaiming it among the Russian military émigrés, I ran a grave risk of getting into trouble with the French authorities. Trouble was indeed coming, in no uncertain manner. Without knowing it, I was "on the line" advocated by Lenin.

The strangest feature of all this was the indignation of these newly discovered Social-Revolutionaries when anyone reminded them that the cardinal point of their program was the demand for the nationalization of land, immediate expropriation of the large estates, without compensation, and the liquidation of the landed aristocracy. "But there's the war!" they exclaimed. "Let's win first!" It was easy to reply to them that the autocracy had led the Empire to defeat and invasion, and that, since then, a conservative republic, without understanding of the people's needs, had been managing only to accumulate further catastrophes, until the day of some terrible social crisis when it would go down in unforeseeable ruin.

I was working in a printshop on the Boulevard Port-Royal. Here and elsewhere, I had many contacts with the workers. They, too, were evidently annoyed at the unexpected direction taken by the Russian Revolution. At first they had greeted it with heartfelt pleasure, then they had been sold on the idea that disturbances and so-called "maximalist" demands were weakening the Russian army. I was always being told (since people would say it for my benefit as soon as I disclosed my Russian nationality): "The Bolsheviks are rats, sold out to Germany," or "The Russians are all yellow." I was nearly brained in one bistro for opening a Russian newspaper. I kept telling myself that this people, already bled white, could not be expected to think calmly, still less to have a brotherly understanding of what another distant people, equally bled and overworked, was yearning for. This climate was propitious for the coming to power of the aged Clemenceau, who by and large did not have the reputation of being a reactionary. The legend of his youth, his role in the Dreyfus affair, his famous jibes that brought down ministries, his campaigns against colonial wars, the sympathy he had shown to anarchists at the time of the attacks by Ravachol and Émile Henry, all gave him a halo that outshone the memory of the workers' blood spilled during his first tenure of office. He was seen as a Jacobin rather than as a bourgeois. And in this hour of crisis it proved to be very fortunate for the French bourgeoisie to find this energetic and stubborn old man. We hated him as much as we admired him.

I learnt that, through an outstanding coincidence of events, France had just passed through a suppressed revolutionary crisis. March 1917:

the downfall of the Russian autocracy. April 1917: the mutinies in Champagne. These were actually more serious than has been made out since. A whole army practically disintegrated, and there was talk of its marching on Paris. Commander in Chief Nivelle, Joffre's successor, had in April tried to break through the German front at Craonne and Rheims, and paid so hard a price for a slight advance that he had to stop the offensive himself. At this point the mutinies broke out. They were quelled without excessive repression, which proved to be a most sensible move. Another supremely important psychological factor came to bear at just this moment to restore the army's morale: the entry of the United States into the war (6 April; the Nivelle offensive began on 9 April). Confidence was restored; from now on victory was possible; the Russian Revolution, which was complicating the situation, became unpopular. A tiny working-class minority alone continued to support it, together with the Vie Ouvrière group (Monatte* and Rosmer*), a few Socialists like Jean Longuet* and Rappoport,* and anarchist elements that were more numerous but also more muddled.

Clemenceau came to power at apparently the most critical hour; actually the worst moment of the crisis was over, whichever way you looked at it. Psychological recovery had been achieved, the American troops were landing, the Battle of the Atlantic was turning in the Allies' favor (in April, the black month, Britain had only three weeks' supply of food, because of the U-boat campaign). He began by destroying the peace party at home; its semi-official leader was Joseph Caillaux,* Deputy for La Sarthe and former Prime Minister, a cunning and reactionary financier whom I had recently called "*Caillot de sang*" ("blood clot") in a newspaper headline. The peace party was counting on the weariness of the masses, on the fear of a European revolution, on the vacillations of the Habsburgs and on the social crisis maturing in Germany, and it was encouraged in various ways by German agents. Almereyda, now editor of *Le Bonnet Rouge*, had become the factotum of this party; if it had won, he would have made a popular Minister able, sincerely but still treacherously, to exploit the feelings of the masses that were sympathetic to Socialism and anarchism. Like nearly all the other revolutionaries, I had stopped seeing

him ever since he became involved in what we ironically called "high politics" behind the scenes of high finance. Intoxicated with money and danger, he was dissipating his life, a morphine addict now, surrounded by theatricals, blackmailers, beautiful women, and political touts of every description. The graph of his destiny had started from the Paris underworld, had risen to a climax of revolutionary pugnacity, and was now tailing off in corruption, among the moneybags. When Clemenceau had him and his staff arrested, I knew at once that it would be impossible to try him; he would have been too likely to put the war in the dock and thoroughly compromise the men behind him. He would probably have been shot, but not alone. A few days afterwards, he was found in his prison bunk, strangled with a shoelace. The business was never cleared up.

That summer Paris lived merrily, as much out of determined confidence as from recklessness. The American soldiers were bringing in plenty of money. The Germans had been at Noyon, 100 or so kilometers away, for so long that people had got used to them and felt no unusual anxiety. At night the approach of the Gotha bombers set off the wails of the air-raid sirens, everyone went down to the cellars, and a few bombs would fall. From a tiny garret near Pont Neuf, I watched these aerial battles—though in truth all one could see were the crossed searchlight beams. We stood at the window, two friends, talking in hushed tones of the pointless death that could ensue. "If my books were destroyed," my friend would say, "I wouldn't want to survive them. You, at least, hope for a revolution, but I don't even have that." He was an educated worker, enlisted to carry out mindless tasks. Suspicion, informing, and uncertainties were the rule everywhere; some poor wretches were arrested for a word spoken in the street. I was enjoying my precarious freedom by studying the history of art—what was there better to do while this respite lasted? One day I was arrested in the street by two terrified inspectors, who for some unknown reason were expecting me to resist to the death. They were visibly gratified when I told them that I had no arms and no intention of putting up a fight. Since there was strictly nothing that could be held against me, except perhaps "dangerous thoughts," to use the happy expression

of the Japanese legislator, I was conveyed by administrative decision to a concentration camp at Précigné, in La Sarthe.

There I found a whole collection of revolutionaries, mainly Russians and Jews, like me labeled "Bolsheviks" without, of course, being anything of the kind. Once modern civilization's guarantees of individual freedom are withdrawn, repression advances only by approximations, gropingly, thrashing around in confusion. The strategy at such times is to lock up everyone in certain categories—and God will always recognize his own! I was not unduly indignant, feeling so much of an outsider, so determined to live for other reasons than those of this world, that my very existence was an infraction of the unwritten law of conformity. At Précigné I quickly started a Russian revolutionary grouping, consisting of about fifteen militants and twenty or so sympathizers. It included only one Bolshevik, the chemical engineer Krauterkrafft, whose constant antagonist I was, since he advocated a merciless dictatorship, suppression of press freedom, authoritarian revolution, and education on Marxist lines. (Later on he refused to leave for Russia.) We desired a libertarian, democratic revolution, without the hypocrisy and flabbiness of the bourgeois democracies—egalitarian and tolerant towards ideas and people, which would employ terror if it was necessary but would abolish the death penalty. From a theoretical point of view, we stated these problems very badly; certainly the Bolshevik put them better than we. From the human standpoint, we were infinitely nearer the truth than he was. We saw in the power of the Soviets the realization of our deepest hopes, as he did also. Our mutual understanding was based on deep misunderstanding, as well as on sheer necessity.

Guarded by weary Territorials, who never had an idea unless it was to re-sell us bottles of wine at a handsome profit, we would hold pro-Soviet meetings in the courtyard of this secularized monastery. Paul Fouchs, an impassioned old libertarian artlessly proud of his resemblance to Lafargue, used to take the platform with me. Belgians, Macedonians, Alsatians, and variegated "suspects" (some of them genuinely, in fact horribly, suspect) would hear us out in silence, respectful but disapproving since we were "in bad odor" with the authorities as well as throwing away any hope of release that we had; and then

too, "What has been will be, there's always been rich and poor, war is in man's blood, you won't change anything of that, you'd do better to get out of your own mess . . . ."

The Belgians and Alsatians were vaguely pro-German; the Macedonians, proud, destitute, and silent, were just Macedonians, ready to fight the whole world for their primitive mountain liberty. These lived as a community, all sharing the same misery, all lousy, hungry, and brotherly. Belgians and Alsatians were divided into the rich, the poor, and the crooked middlemen. The rich could pay for small, comfortable rooms, decorated with posters of smiling, half-dressed women, where they spent their time cooking up fancy meals and playing cards. The poor washed the dirty linen of the rich. The very poorest would sell their bread ration to the rich so as to buy some fags from the black market dealers, got their food from the garbage, and died, devoured by vermin. We organized a soup kitchen for them, but we had hardly any money and it could not save them all. They starved in spite of our soup. The dealers opened little cafés in the corners of the dormitories, ran pawning operations at night by candlelight, and organized gambling dens where frenzied fights would break out from time to time. They also had male prostitutes at the disposal of their clients and even, with the remunerated collusion of the guards, ways and means of procuring for the rich the unbelievable pleasure of fifteen minutes in a dark corner with some farm girl. A miniature society, utterly self-contained and utterly divided, scorned by us and a little afraid of us.

The camp's regimen was reasonably fair, relatively free. The only trouble was that we were hungry. Spanish influenza was rife and death was our perpetual companion. An infirmary improvised in a ground-floor room held the dying, with those of us who had volunteered as nurses sitting up by them. They were left to wheeze and go blue, or else spotty like a panther's skin, and then cold . . . What could we do? For my part I spent the night in the open, near the doorway of this stinking mortuary, getting up now and then to give a drink to some dying man. Our group did not have a single death: although we had nearly all been infected; our solidarity meant that we could eat better than the other poor devils. A quarter of the camp's population was carried off in a few weeks; however, not one rich prisoner died. We looked

after each other, refused to allow our sick to be taken to the infirmary-mortuary, and those who appeared to be completely gone—recovered. I learnt a few commonsense things about medicine: the essential treatment for the worst cases—food and comforting. Give them confidence: we won't let you go, mate, hang on!

During the epidemic we continued to assemble and conduct our studies. During one of the meetings, which I was holding purposely on that particular evening to distract the guards' attention, one of our group tried to escape, under cover of a storm. He fell in the camp's perimeter, under the livid glare of searchlights: "Twenty years old, and six bullets in his body," it was remarked. On the following day we summoned the camp to revolt. The Starost, or Elder of the Macedonians, came and told us that they would support us. The Belgians and the Alsatians answered that this trifle was no business of theirs, that it would all come to grief, and as far as they were concerned, nothing doing. The local Prefect came, and promised us an inquiry. The commandant of the camp asked for a confidential interview with me. At it he disclosed that he knew of the plan of escape from a camp trader, that several internees were due to bolt (this was true), and that the guards had meant to kill another prisoner, a Romanian scoundrel suspected of espionage, who was an informer into the bargain.

"On my word of honor, we did intend to let your comrade run off, and I am brokenhearted at what happened; a mistake, I assure you . . ." His information was correct, and the revolt subsided. We felt a physical revulsion for the spies. The reprieved informer continued to stroll up and down the yard, smoking his dirty-yellow cigarettes.

Civil war was breaking out in Russia. In consequence of the counterrevolutionary rising at Yaroslavl and Dora Kaplan's assassination attempt against Lenin, the Cheka arrested Mr. Lockhart, the British Consul in Moscow, and the French military mission under General Lavergne. Negotiations were set in hand through the Danish Red Cross, with a view to an exchange of hostages. Chicherin, himself released from a British concentration camp, demanded the liberation of Litvinov, who was imprisoned in London, and of the "Bolsheviks" interned in France—us, that is. The negotiations were successful only after the general explosion of goodwill at the Armistice. The authori-

ties offered us a choice between release, in the near future, or leaving now for Russia as hostages, with the safety of the French officers hanging over our heads. Five out of the fifteen or so in our group joined me in insisting on departure. They were Dimitri Barakov, a syndicalist sailor, who wanted to see red Russia before he died (we kept him alive with injections during the voyage and he died as soon as we arrived); André Brode, a Lett sailor, who was soon to die in the defense of the port of Riga; Max Feinberg, a young Jewish Socialist who was to die of typhus on the Polish front; one probable traitor; and one plant. We set off with our sacks over our shoulders, in the cold of the night, pursued by cries of joy from the whole camp. Several of the worst inmates had come to embrace us as we left, and we had no heart to push them away. The frozen snow echoed sharply under our feet, and the stars receded in front of us. The night was huge and buoyant.

We journeyed through bombarded towns, in countryside dotted with wooden crosses on the railway embankments, until we came into the territory of the "Tommies." One night, in a port whose houses were shattered by bombs, the sick man in our party, some police officers, and I went into a tavern filled with British soldiers. They noticed our unusual appearance. "Who are you lot? Where are you going?"

"Revolutionaries—we are going to Russia." Thirty tanned faces surrounded us eagerly, there were hearty exclamations all around us, and we had to shake everybody's hand. Since the Armistice

Dunkirk, December 1918. Center, seated: Dr. Nikolayenko; Serge, just turned twenty-eight, standing behind

popular feeling had changed once again; the Russian Revolution was once more a distant beacon to men.

In the converted prison at Dunkirk another group of hostages was waiting for us, led from another camp by a Dr. Nikolayenko.* The exchange was being made man for man, and the Russians were tricked: out of forty hostages, hardly ten were genuine militants, and nearly twenty were children. Should we protest against this trickery? Dr. Nikolayenko, very tall, white-haired, and narrow-eyed, affirmed that "a child at the breast is well worth any general." Connected with the Russian seamen's union, he had organized a strike at Marseilles on ships loaded with munitions bound for the Whites. He and I were elected as delegates by the whole group.

"Are these hostages too, these kids less than ten years old?" I asked some of the officers. "Do you think that is compatible with military honor?" They spread out their hands, mortified: "We can do nothing about it." Rather likable men, they used to read Romain Rolland's* *Above the Battle* in their cabins. This conversation took place at sea, off the level shores of Denmark, on a milky sea from which the mast-ends of sunken ships could sometimes be seen emerging. Our remarks were apropos of a rumor then abroad that some French officers had perished in Russia; we were informed that we were in danger of reprisals.

It was a fine voyage, in first-class berths. A destroyer escorted our steamer, and now and then took long shots at floating mines. A dark gush would rise from the waves and the child hostages applauded. From mist and sea there emerged the massive outline of Elsinore's gray stone castle, with its roofs of dull emerald. Weak Prince Hamlet, you faltered in that fog of crimes, but you put the question well. "To be or not to be," for the men of our age, means free will or servitude, and they have only to choose. We are leaving the void, and entering the kingdom of the will. This, perhaps, is the imaginary frontier. A land awaits us where life is beginning anew, where conscious will, intelligence and an inexorable love of mankind are in action. Behind us, all Europe is ablaze, having choked almost to death in the fog of its own massacres. Barcelona's flame smolders on. Germany is in the thick of revolution, Austro-Hungary is splitting into free nations. Italy is spread with red flags . . . this is only the beginning. We are being

born into violence: not only you and I, who are fairly unimportant, but all those to whom, unknown to themselves, we belong, down to this tin-hatted Senegalese freezing under his fur on his dismal watch at the foot of the officers' gangway. Outbursts of idealism like this, if truth be known, kept getting mixed up with our heated discussions on points of doctrine. Then an amazing girl-child of twenty, whose big eyes held both smiles and a kind of suppressed fear, would come on deck to seek us out, telling us that tea was ready in the cabin, crammed with children, occupied by an old anarchist worker who was more enthusiastic even than we were. I called this girl-child "Bluebird," and it was she who brought me the news of the murder of Karl Liebknecht* and Rosa Luxemburg.*

Liuba Russakova,* Serge's "Bluebird"

From the Åland Isles onwards the Baltic was ice, studded with islands of white. A hundred yards ahead, a destroyer kept ramming the ice, and our steamer would advance slowly through the floe, by a narrow, gurgling channel. Enormous blocks of ice, torn away in some elemental struggle, floated around and around under our bows. We gazed at them till we were dizzy. There were moments of trance when I found this spectacle pregnant with meaning, and it was lovelier than all the enchantment of the countryside.

Finland received us as foes, for the White Terror was only just over. Hangö, a deserted port, under snow. Surly officials answered me in Russian that they did not speak Russian! "Well then, do you speak Spanish, Turkish, or Chinese? We are internationalists, the only language we don't speak is yours!" The French officers interceded and we were caged in railway carriages whose exits were guarded by silent blond giants, stony-eyed and cowled in white, with orders to shoot (as we were warned) at the first attempt to leave the train. I pressed my question: "Please ask Monsieur the Finnish officer if this order applies to the child hostages as well?"

Monsieur the officer was enraged: "To everyone!"

"Please thank Monsieur the officer."

The cold air was heavy with chilled violence. Without ever leaving the train, we crossed this huge land of sleepy woods, snow-covered lakes, tracts of whiteness, and pretty painted cottages lost in the wilderness. We went through towns so tidy and silent that they reminded us of children's toys. We had a moment of panic when, as evening fell, the train stopped in a clearing and soldiers lined up alongside the tracks: we were invited to get down. The women murmured, "They're going to shoot us." We refused to leave the train, but it was only to give us a breath of air while we waited for the cars to be cleaned and the engine to be fueled with wood. The sentries ignored their instructions and started to be pleasant to the children.

We crossed the Soviet frontier at dead of night, in the middle of a forest. Our progress was painful, blocked by the snow. The sharp cold bored through our thin Western clothing and our teeth chattered. The children, swaddled in bedclothes, were crying. Men with lanterns, standing on a little white bridge in the misty moonlight, counted us as we passed. Choked with joy, we shouted "Greetings, comrade!" to a Red sentry; he nodded, and then asked if we had any food. We had. Here, take it. The Revolution is hungry.

We gathered around a wood fire that lit us up with fantastic shadows. In the command post of this dead sector of the front, a log hut unfurnished but equipped with telephones, we considered the strangeness of this first contact with our homeland, our Revolution. Two or three Red soldiers in worn greatcoats were busy at the telephones, without any sign of interest in us. Their faces were haggard and they did what they had to, rising above their prodigious fatigue. They livened up when we offered them some tinned food. "What, aren't they hungry in France? Do they still have white bread over there?" We asked them for newspapers, but none were being delivered to them.

We never thought of sleep once we were in the goods wagon. This was efficiently heated by an iron stove and pulled by an asthmatic locomotive that was taking us, through the pale, ideally pure dawn, to Petrograd. A wintry landscape, without trace of man. Brilliance of snow, borderland of emptiness. In a second forlorn little outpost, an-

other soldier, indifferent to everything but hunger and food, found us a copy of *Severnaya Kommuna*, organ of the Petrograd Soviet. It was only a single, fairly large gray sheet, printed in pale ink. From it came our first shock. We had never thought that the idea of revolution could be separated from that of freedom. All we knew of the French Revolution, of the Paris Commune, of 1905 in Russia, showed us popular ferment, bubbling ideas, rivalry of clubs, parties, and publications—except during the Terror, under the "Reign of the Supreme Being"; but the Terror of 1793 was simultaneously a climax and the beginning of a decline, the approach to Thermidor. In Petrograd we expected to breathe the air of a liberty that would doubtless be harsh and even cruel to its enemies, but was still generous and bracing. And in this paper we found a colorless article, signed "G. Zinoviev,"* on "The Monopoly of Power." "*Our Party rules alone*... it will not allow anyone... We are the dictatorship of the proletariat... The false democratic liberties demanded by the counterrevolution." I am quoting from memory, but such was certainly the sense of the piece. We tried to justify it by the state of siege and the mortal perils; however, such considerations could justify particular acts, acts of violence towards men and ideas, but not a theory based on the extinction of all freedom. I note the date of this article: January 1919. The desert of snow was still rolling on beneath our eyes. We were approaching Petrograd.

3.
ANGUISH AND ENTHUSIASM
1919–1920

We were entering a world frozen to death. The Finland station, glittering with snow, was deserted. The square where Lenin had addressed a crowd from the top of an armored car was no more than a white desert surrounded by dead houses. The broad, straight thoroughfares, the bridges astride the Neva, now a river of snowy ice, seemed to belong to an abandoned city; first a gaunt soldier in a gray greatcoat, then after a long time a woman freezing under her shawls, went past like phantoms in an oblivious silence.

Towards the city center, gentle ghostlike hints of life began. Open sleds, pulled by starving horses, proceeded unhurriedly over the white expanse. There were practically no cars. The rare passersby, eaten by cold and hunger, had faces of ghastly white. Squads of half-ragged soldiers, their rifles often hanging from their shoulders by a rope, tramped around under the red pennants of their units. Palaces drowsed at the end of spacious prospects or before the frozen canals; others, more massive, lorded it over yesterday's parade squares. The smart baroque façades of the imperial family's residences were painted over in oxblood red; the theaters, the military headquarters, the former ministries, all in Empire style, made a background of noble colonnades among huge stretches of emptiness. The high gilded dome of St. Isaac, upheld by mighty red granite pillars, hung over this wasting city like a symbol of past glories. We contemplated the low embrasures of the Peter-Paul Fortress and its golden spire, thinking of all the revolutionaries who, since Bakunin and Nechayev,* had fought and now lay dead under those stones, that the world might belong to us. It was the metropolis of Cold, of Hunger, of Hatred, and of Endurance.

From about a million inhabitants its population had now fallen, in one year, to scarcely seven hundred thousand souls.

At a reception center we were issued with basic rations of black bread and dried fish. Never until now had any of us known such a horrid diet. Girls with red headbands joined with young bespectacled agitators to give us a summary of the state of affairs: "Famine, typhus and counterrevolution everywhere. But the world revolution is bound to save us." They were surer of it than we were, and our doubts made them momentarily suspicious of us. All they asked us was whether Europe would soon be kindled: "What is the French proletariat waiting for before it seizes power?"

The Bolshevik leaders that I saw spoke to me in more or less the same tones. Zinoviev's wife, Lilina, People's Commissar for Social Planning in the Northern Commune, a small crop-haired, gray-eyed woman in a uniform jacket, sprightly and tough, asked me, "Have you brought your families with you? I could put them up in palaces, which I know is very nice on some occasions, but it is impossible to heat them. You'd better go to Moscow. Here, we are besieged people in a city under siege. Hunger riots may start, the Finns may swoop on us, the British may attack. Typhus has killed so many people that we can't manage to bury them; luckily they are frozen. If work is what you want, there's plenty of it!" And she told me passionately of the Soviet achievement: school building, children's centers, relief for pensioners, free medical assistance, the theaters open to all... "We work on in spite of everything and we shall carry on working till our last hour!" Later I was to learn at first hand how hard she worked, never showing any sign of being worn down.

Shklovsky, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs (in the Northern Commune), an intellectual with a black beard and a jaundiced complexion, met me in a room of what was lately military headquarters.

"What are they saying about us abroad ?"

"They're saying that Bolshevism equals banditry."

"There's something in that," he replied calmly. "You'll see for yourself, things are too much for us. In the Revolution the revolutionaries only amount to a very tiny percentage." He outlined the situation to

me, sparing nothing: a revolution dying, strangled by blockade, ready to collapse from inside into the chaos of counterrevolution. He was a man of bitterly clear vision. (He committed suicide around 1930.)

Zinoviev, the President of the Soviet, by contrast affected an extraordinary confidence. Clean-shaven, pale, his face a little puffy, he felt absolutely at home on the pinnacle of power, being the most long-standing of Lenin's collaborators in the Central Committee: all the same there was also an impression of flabbiness, almost of a lurking irresolution, emanating from his whole personality. Abroad, a frightful reputation for terror surrounded his name; I told him this.

"Of course," he answered, smiling, "they don't like our plebeian methods of fighting." And he alluded to the latest delegation from the Consular Corps, who were making representations to him in favor of the hostages taken from the bourgeoisie. He sent them about their business: "If it was we who were being shot, these gentlemen would be quite happy, wouldn't they?"

Our conversation turned principally on the state of mass feeling in the Western countries. I kept saying that tremendous events were maturing, only the process was sluggish, halting, and blind, and that in France, more particularly, no revolutionary upheaval was to be expected for a long time. Zinoviev smiled, with an air of kindly condescension. "It is easy to tell that you are no Marxist. History cannot stop halfway."

Maxim Gorky welcomed me affectionately. In the famished years of his youth, he had been acquainted with my mother's family at Nizhni-Novgorod. His apartment in the Kronversky Prospect, full of books and Chinese objets d'art, seemed as warm as a greenhouse. He himself was chilly even under his thick gray sweater, and coughed terribly, the result of his thirty-year struggle against tuberculosis. Tall, lean and bony, broad-shouldered and hollow-chested, he stooped a little as he walked. His frame, sturdily built but anemic, appeared essentially as a support for his head, an ordinary Russian man-in-the-street's head, bony and pitted, really almost ugly with its jutting cheekbones, great thin-lipped mouth, and professional smeller's nose, broad and peaked. His complexion deathly, he was chewing away under his short, bristly mustache, full of dejection, or rather of anguish

mingled with indignation. His bushy brows puckered readily, and his big, gray eyes held an extraordinary wealth of expression. His whole being expressed hunger for knowledge and human understanding, determination to probe all inhuman doings to their depths, never stopping at mere appearances, never tolerating any lies told to him, and never lying to himself. I saw him immediately as the supreme, the righteous, the relentless witness of the Revolution, and it was as such that he talked with me.

He spoke harshly about the Bolsheviks: they were "drunk with authority," "cramping the violent, spontaneous anarchy of the Russian people," and "starting bloody despotism all over again." All the same they were "facing chaos alone" with some incorruptible men in their leadership. His observations always started from facts, from chilling anecdotes upon which he would base his well-considered generalizations. The prostitutes were sending a delegation to him, demanding the right to organize a trade union. The entire work of a scholar who had devoted his whole life to the study of religious sects had been stupidly confiscated by the Cheka, and then stupidly transported across the city through the snow and a whole cartload of documents and manuscripts was perishing on a deserted quay because the horse was dying of hunger; by chance, some students brought a few bundles of precious manuscripts to Alexei Maximovich [Gorky]. The fate of the hostages in the jails was nothing short of monstrous. Hunger was weakening the masses, and distorting the cerebral processes of the whole country. This Socialist revolution was rising from the greatest depths of barbaric old Russia. The countryside was systematically pillaging the city, demanding something, even if it were useless, in exchange for every handful of flour brought clandestinely into the city by the muzhiks. "They are taking gilded chairs, candelabras, and even pianos back to their villages. I've even seen them carrying streetlights..." At present it was imperative to side with the revolutionary regime, for fear of a rural counterrevolution which would be nothing less than an outburst of savagery. Alexei Maximovich spoke to me of strange tortures rediscovered for the benefit of "Commissars" in remote country districts, such as pulling out the intestines through an incision in the abdomen and coiling them slowly around a tree. He

thought that the tradition of these tortures was kept up through the reading of *The Golden Legend*.[1]

The non-Communist (i.e., anti-Bolshevik) intellectuals, by far the great majority, whom I saw gave me more or less the same general picture. They thought of Bolshevism as finished, consumed by famine and terror, opposed by all the peasants of the countryside, all the intelligentsia, and the great majority of the working class. The people who spoke thus to me were Socialists who had been enthusiastic participants in the March 1917 Revolution. The Jews among them were living in terror of approaching pogroms. All of them expected chaos, replete with massacres. The doctrinal follies of Lenin and Trotsky will have to be paid for. Bolshevism is nothing but a corpse, according to an engineer who had studied at Liège. All that has to be decided is who will be its gravedigger. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, and certain crimes at the beginning of the Revolution, such as the execution (or murder) of the Hingleize brothers and the murder, in a hospital, of the Liberal deputies Shingarev and Kokoshkin, had left a wake of enraged resentment. The violent acts of mob agitators such as the Kronstadt sailors so offended the humane feelings of men of goodwill that they lost all their critical faculties. Against how many hangings, humiliations, ruthless repressions, threatened reprisals, did these excesses have to be set? If the other side won would it be any more merciful? Besides, what were the Whites doing in the areas where they ruled the roost? I moved among intellectuals who wept for their dream of an enlightened democracy, governed by a sagacious Parliament and inspired by an idealistic press (their own, of course). Every conversation I had with them convinced me that, face-to-face with the ruthlessness of history, they were wrong. I saw that their cause of democracy had, at the end of the summer of 1917, stood between two fires, that is to say between two conspiracies, and it seemed obvious to me that, if the Bolshevik insurrection had not taken power at that point, the cabal of the old generals, supported by the officers' organizations, would have certainly done so instead. Russia would have avoided the Red Terror only to endure the White, and a proletar-

1. A thirteenth-century "Lives of the Saints."

ian dictatorship only to undergo a reactionary one. In consequence, the most outraged observations of the anti-Bolshevik intellectuals only revealed to me how necessary Bolshevism was.

Moscow, with its old Italian and Byzantine architecture, its innumerable churches, its snows, its human ant-heap, its great public departments, its half-clandestine markets, wretched but colorful, taking up vast squares: Moscow seemed to live a little better than Petrograd. Here Committees were piled on top of Councils, and Managements on top of Commissions. Of this apparatus, which seemed to me to function largely in a void, wasting three-quarters of its time on unrealizable projects, I at once formed the worst possible impression. Already, in the midst of general misery, it was nurturing a multitude of bureaucrats who were responsible for more fuss than honest work. In the offices of Commissariats one came across elegant gentlemen, pretty and irreproachably powdered typists, chic uniforms weighed down with decorations; and everybody in this smart set, in such contrast with the famished populace in the streets, kept sending you back and forth from office to office for the slightest matter and without the slightest result. I witnessed members of Government circles driven to telephoning Lenin to obtain a railway ticket or a room in the hotel, i.e., the "House of the Soviets." The Central Committee's secretariat gave me some tickets for lodgings, but I got none, because initiation into the racket was more necessary than any ticket.

I met the Menshevik* leaders, and certain anarchists. Both sets denounced Bolshevik intolerance, the stubborn refusal to revolutionary dissenters of any right to exist, and the excesses of the Terror. Neither group, however, had any substantial alternative to suggest. The Mensheviks were publishing a daily paper, which was widely read; they had recently announced their allegiance to the regime and recovered their legality. They demanded the abolition of the Cheka and sang the praises of a return to Soviet democracy. One anarchist group canvassed the idea of a federation of free communes; others saw no future except in fresh insurrections, although realizing that famine was blocking all possible progress in the Revolution. I learnt that, around the autumn of 1918, the anarchist Black Guards had felt powerful enough for their leaders to discuss whether or not they should seize

Moscow. Novomirsky and Borovoy had won the majority over to the virtues of abstention. "We would not know what to do about the famine," they said. "Let it exhaust the Bolsheviks and lead the dictatorship of the Commissars to its grave. Then our hour will come!"

The Mensheviks seemed to me to be admirably intelligent, honest, and devoted to Socialism, but completely overtaken by events. They stood for a sound principle, that of working-class democracy, but a situation such as the state of siege, fraught with such mortal danger, did not permit any functioning of democratic institutions. And their bitterness, arising out of their brutal defeat as the party of compromise, disfigured their thinking. Since they waited on the coming of some catastrophe, their declaration of support for the regime was only lip service. They were further compromised by the fact that in 1917 they had supported governments that had failed to carry out agrarian reform and had failed to impede the military counterrevolution.

Of the Bolshevik leaders, on this occasion in Moscow I saw only Aveli Yenukidze, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the All-Union Soviets—actually the key post in the Republic's government. He was a fair-headed Georgian, with a kind, sturdy face lit up by blue eyes. His bearing was corpulent and grand, that of a mountain dweller born and bred. He was affable, humorous, and realistic, striking the same note as the Bolsheviks in Petrograd.

"Our bureaucracy's a scandal, no doubt about it. I think Petrograd is healthier. I even advise you to settle down there unless you are too scared of Petrograd's peculiar dangers. Here, we combine all the vices of the old Russia with those of the new. Petrograd is an outpost, the front line." While talking about bread and tinned food, I asked him, "Do you think we will hold out? Sometimes I feel like I'm from another planet and think the revolution is in its death throes." He burst out laughing. "That's because you don't know us. We are infinitely stronger than we seem."

Gorky offered me employment with him in the Petrograd publishing house Universal Literature, but the only people I met there were aging or embittered intellectuals trying to escape from the present by retranslating Boccaccio, Knut Hamsun, or Balzac. My mind was made up: I was neither against the Bolsheviks nor neutral; I was with them,

albeit independently, without renouncing thought or critical sense. It would have been easy for me to pursue careers in Government but I decided to avoid them and also, as far as possible, jobs that required the exercise of authority. Others seemed to so enjoy them that I thought I could legitimately afford this obviously wrongheaded attitude. I would support the Bolsheviks because they were doing what was necessary tenaciously, doggedly, with magnificent ardor and a calculated passion; I would be with them because they alone were carrying this out, taking all responsibilities on themselves, all the initiatives, and were demonstrating an astonishing strength of spirit. Certainly on several essential points they were mistaken: in their intolerance, in their faith in statification, in their leaning towards centralism and administrative techniques. But, given that one had to counter them with freedom of the spirit and the spirit of freedom, it must be with them and among them. Possibly, after all, these evils had been impelled by civil war, blockade, and famine, and if we managed to survive, the remedy would come of itself. I remember having written in one of my first letters from Russia that I was "resolved to make no career out of the Revolution, and, once the mortal danger has passed, to join again with those who will fight the evils of the new regime..."

I was on the staff of the *Severnaya Kommuna* (Northern Commune), the organ of the Petrograd Soviet, an instructor in the public education clubs, organizing inspector for schools in the Second District, lecturing assistant to the Petrograd militia, etc. People were in short supply, and I was overwhelmed with work. All this activity brought me the means of bare existence from one day to the next, in a chaos that was oddly organized. The militiamen to whom I gave evening classes in history and the first elements of "political science" (or "political grammar," as it was called) would offer me a cob of black bread and a herring if the lesson had been interesting. Happy to ask me endless questions, they would escort me after the lesson through the shadows of the city, right up to my lodgings, in case anyone should steal my precious little parcel, and we would all trip over the carcass of a horse, dead in the snow in front of the Opera House.

The Third International* had just been founded in Moscow (it was now March 1919) and had appointed Zinoviev as President of its

Executive (the proposal was actually Lenin's). The new Executive still possessed neither personnel nor offices. Although I was not a member of the Party, Zinoviev asked me to organize his administration. As my knowledge of Russian life was too limited, I was unwilling to assume such a responsibility by myself. After some days Zinoviev told me, "I've found an excellent man, you'll get along with him really well . . ." —and so it turned out. It was thus that I came to know Vladimir Ossipovich Mazin,* who, prompted by the same motives as myself, had just joined the Party.

Through its severely practical centralization of power, and its repugnance towards individualism and celebrity, the Russian Revolution has left in obscurity at least as many first-rate men as it has made famous. Of all these great but still practically unknown figures, Mazin seems to me to be one of the most remarkable. One day, in an enormous room in the Smolny Institute,* furnished solely with a table and two chairs, we met face-to-face, both of us rigged out rather absurdly. I still wore a large sheepskin hat that had been a present from a Cossack and a short, shabby overcoat, the garb of the Western unemployed. Mazin wore an old blue uniform with worn-out elbows. He had a three days' growth of beard, his eyes were encircled by old-fashioned spectacles of white metal, his face was elongated, his brow lofty, and his complexion pasty from starvation.

"Well," he said to me, "so we're the Executive of the new International. It's really ridiculous!" And upon that bare table we set about drawing rough sketches of seals, for a seal was required immediately for the President: the great seal of the World Revolution, no more, no less! We decided that the globe would be the emblem on it.

We were friends with the same points of concern, doubt, and confidence, spending any moments spared us from our grinding work in examining together the problems of authority, terror, centralization, Marxism, and heresy. We both had strong leanings towards heresy. I was beginning my initiation into Marxism. Mazin had arrived there through the path of personal experience in jail. With those convictions he combined an old-fashioned libertarian heart and an ascetic temperament.

As an adolescent in 1905 on the revolutionary day of 22 January, he had seen the St. Petersburg streets running with the blood of working-class petitioners, and at once decided, even while the Cossacks were clearing away the crowd with their stubby whips, to study the chemistry of explosives. He very soon became one of the chemists of the Maximalist group, who wanted a "total" Socialist revolution. He, Vladimir Ossipovich Lichtenstadt, son of a good liberal-bourgeois family, manufactured the bombs that went with three of his comrades who presented themselves, dressed as officers, on 12 August 1906, at a gala entertainment for the Prime Minister Stolypin, and who, in blowing up the house, blew themselves up too. Some time afterwards, the Maximalists attacked a Treasury van in the broad daylight of St. Petersburg. Lichtenstadt was condemned to death, then pardoned; he spent ten years in prison at Schlüsselburg,[2] much of it in the same cell as the Georgian Bolshevik Sergo Ordzhonikidze, who was to become one of the organizers of Soviet industrialization. In confinement Lichtenstadt wrote a work of scientific meditation that was later published (*Goethe and the Philosophy of Nature*), and studied Marx.

One morning in March 1917 the prisoners of Schlüsselburg were called to the courtyard by the guards, bearing weapons. They believed they were going to be slaughtered; they could hear the cries of a furious crowd surrounding the prison walls. Actually, this crowd was deliriously joyful; it broke down the doors, the blacksmiths with their tools at the head, to break the prisoners' chains. It was the prisoners who had to protect their guards. On the day he got out of prison, Lichtenstadt and the anarchist Justin Jouk had to take charge of the administration of the town of Schlüsselburg. After the death in battle of another prisoner, a friend whom he admired, Lichtenstadt adopted the dead man's name and called himself Mazin, to remain faithful to his example. As a Marxist, he was at first a Menshevik, because of his zeal for democracy, and then entered the Bolshevik Party to be on the side of those who were the most active, the most creative, and the

2. Schlüsselburg, also known as Petrokrepost or Peter's Fortress, was a redoubtable prison for political prisoners about forty miles up the River Neva from Petrograd.

most imperiled. He had a consuming interest in great books, a scholar's soul, a childlike frankness in the face of evil, and few basic wants. For eleven years he had been waiting to see his wife again; she was at present separated from him by the southern front. "The faults in the Revolution," he would say to me over and over again, "must be fought in the realm of action."

We spent our lives among telephones, trailing around the huge, dead city in wheezy motorcars, commandeering printshops; selecting staff; correcting proofs even in the trams; bargaining with the Board of Trade for string and with the State Bank's printers for paper; running to the Cheka or to distant suburban prisons whenever (which was every day) we were notified of some abomination, fatal mistake, or piece of cruelty; and conferring with Zinoviev in the evening. Since we were senior officials we lived in the Hotel Astoria, the foremost "House of the Soviets," where the most responsible of the Party's militants resided under the protection of machine guns posted on the ground floor. Through the black market I came into possession of a fur-lined riding jacket which, cleared of its fleas, made me look wonderful. In the former Austro-Hungarian Embassy we found some Habsburg officers' clothes, in excellent condition, for some of the comrades on our new staff. We were enormously privileged, although the bourgeoisie, dispossessed and now addicted to every imaginable form of speculation, lived much better than we did. Every day, at the table reserved for the Northern Commune Executive, we found greasy soup and often a ration of slightly high but still delicious horsemeat. The customary diners there were Zinoviev; Yevdokimov* from the Central Committee; Zorin from the Petrograd Committee; Bakayev,* President of the Cheka; sometimes Helena Stassova, Secretary of the Central Committee; and sometimes Stalin, who was practically unknown. Zinoviev occupied an apartment on the first floor of the Astoria. As an extraordinary privilege, this hotel of dictators was kept almost warm, and was lit brightly at nightfall since work there never stopped, and thus it formed an enormous vessel of light above the dark public squares. Rumor endowed us with incredible comfort and even detailed our alleged orgies, with actresses from the corps de ballet, naturally. All this time, Bakayev of the Cheka was going

around with holes in his boots. In spite of my special rations as a Government official, I would have died of hunger without the sordid manipulations of the black market, where we traded the petty possessions we had brought in from France. The eldest son of my friend Ionov, Zinoviev's brother-in-law, an Executive member of the Soviet and founder and director of the State Library, died of hunger before our very eyes. All this while we were looking after considerable stocks, and even riches, but on the State's behalf and under rigorous control, something that our subordinates never ceased to mock us over. Our salaries were limited to the "Communist maximum," equal to the average wage of a skilled worker. During this period the old Lettish Bolshevik and Soviet delegate Peter Stuchka,* a great figure now forgotten, instituted a strictly egalitarian regime, in which the Party Committee was also the Government: its members were forbidden to enjoy any material privileges at all. Vodka was banned, though the comrades obtained it clandestinely from peasants, who through home distilling extracted a terrifying alcohol from corn, eighty proof. I remember only one orgy, which I happened upon in a room in the Astoria, during a night of danger, where my friends, all heads of sections, were drinking this fiery liquid in silence. On the table was a huge tin of tuna, captured from the English somewhere in the forests of Shenkursk and brought back by a fighter. Sweet and oily, this fish seemed to us a heavenly food. All that blood made us depressed.

The telephone became my personal enemy; perhaps it is for that reason that I still feel a stubborn aversion to it. At every hour it brought me voices of panic-stricken women who spoke of arrests, imminent executions, and injustice, and begged me to intervene at once, for the love of God! Since the first massacres of Red prisoners by the Whites, the murders of Volodarsky* and Uritsky* and the attempt against Lenin (in the summer of 1918), the custom of arresting and, often, executing hostages had become generalized and legal. Already the Cheka (the Extraordinary Commission for Repression against counterrevolution, speculation, and desertion), which made mass arrests of suspects, was tending to settle their fate independently, under formal control by the Party, but in reality without anybody's knowledge. It was becoming a State within the State, protected by military

secrecy and proceedings *in camera*. The Party endeavored to head it with incorruptible men like the former convict Dzerzhinsky,* a sincere idealist, ruthless but chivalrous, with the emaciated profile of an Inquisitor: tall forehead, bony nose, untidy goatee, and an expression of weariness and austerity. But the Party had few men of this stamp and many Chekas: these gradually came to select their personnel by virtue of their psychological inclinations. The only temperaments that devoted themselves willingly and tenaciously to this task of "internal defense" were those characterized by suspicion, embitterment, harshness, and sadism. Long-standing social inferiority complexes and memories of humiliations and suffering in the Tsar's jails rendered them intractable, and since professional degeneration has rapid effects, the Chekas inevitably consisted of perverted men tending to see conspiracy everywhere and to live in the midst of perpetual conspiracy themselves.

I believe that the formation of the Chekas was one of the gravest and most impermissible errors that the Bolshevik leaders committed in 1918, when plots, blockades, and interventions made them lose their heads. All evidence indicates that revolutionary tribunals, functioning in the light of day (without excluding secret sessions in particular cases) and admitting the right of defense, would have attained the same efficiency with far less abuse and depravity. Was it so necessary to revert to the procedures of the Inquisition? By the beginning of 1919, the Chekas had little or no resistance against this psychological perversion and corruption. I know for a fact that Dzerzhinsky judged them to be "half-rotten," and saw no solution to the evil except in shooting the worst Chekists and abolishing the death penalty as quickly as possible... Meanwhile, the Terror went on, since the whole Party was living in the sure inner knowledge that they would be massacred in the event of defeat, and defeat remained possible from one week to the next.

In every prison there were quarters reserved for Chekists, judges, police of all sorts, informers, and executioners. The executioners, who used Nagan revolvers, generally ended by being executed themselves. They would begin to drink, to wander around and fire unexpectedly at anybody. I was acquainted with several cases of this sort. I was also

closely acquainted with the terrible Chudin case. Still young, though a revolutionary of 1905 vintage, Chudin, a tall curly-headed lad whose roguish stare was softened by his pince-nez, had fallen in love with a girl he had met at a class. She became his mistress. A number of swindlers exploited his sincerity by prevailing on him to intercede for some genuine speculators, more than mere suspects, whose release they thus obtained. Dzerzhinsky had Chudin and his girl and the swindlers all shot. No one doubted Chudin's honesty; there was bitter dismay all round. Years later, comrades said to me, "On that day we shot the best man among us." They never forgave themselves.

Fortunately, the democratic manners of the Party were still strong enough to enable militants to intercede fairly easily with the Cheka against certain blunders. It was all the easier for me to do this since the leaders of the Cheka lived at the Astoria, including Ivan Bakayev, president of the "Extraordinary Commission." Bakayev was a handsome fellow of about thirty, with the careless appearance of a Russian village accordion player; indeed, he liked to wear a smock with an embroidered collar and colored border, just like such a player. In the performance of his frightful duty he exercised an impartial will and a scrupulous vigilance. I saved several people, although once I failed, in circumstances that were both cruel and ridiculous. This concerned an officer named (I think) Nesterenko, a Frenchwoman's husband, who was arrested at Kronstadt in connection with the Lindquist conspiracy. Bakayev promised me that he would personally review the dossier. When I met him again he smiled: "It isn't serious, I'll soon have him released." I took pleasure in disclosing this good news to the suspect's wife and daughter.

A few days later I met Bakayev passing from room to room in the Smolny, joking as he loved to. When he saw me, his face grew pale: "Too late, Victor Lvovich! While I was away they shot the poor devil." He went past to his next business, spreading his hands wide in a gesture of powerlessness.

Shocks of this kind did not happen often, but the Terror was too much for us. I arranged the release of a distant relative, a subaltern confined as a hostage in the Peter-Paul Fortress. He came to me to tell me that they had failed to give him back his papers on his discharge.

"Go and ask for them back," I said. Off he went, only to return thunderstruck. "An official whispered me an answer, 'Don't press for it, you've been reported shot for the last ten days.'" He gave up bothering about the matter.

Often at the Cheka I would meet the man whom I came to dub mentally as the "great interceder," Maxim Gorky. His efforts tormented Zinoviev and Lenin, but he nearly always got his way. In cases that were difficult I approached him, and he never refused to intervene. But, although he was working for the journal *Communist International*, not without violent arguments with Zinoviev over some wording in every article he wrote, he once greeted me with a kind of roaring fury. On that day I was coming from a discussion with Zinoviev. Gorky shouted out, "Don't ever talk to me of that swine, ever again. Tell him that his torturers are a disgrace to the human form!" Their quarrel lasted until Petrograd underwent its new phase of mortal peril.

The spring of 1919 opened with events at once expected and surprising. At the beginning of April Munich acquired a Soviet regime. On 22 March Hungary quietly became a Soviet Republic through the abdication of Count Károlyi's bourgeois government. Béla Kun,* who had been sent to Budapest by Lenin and Zinoviev, came out of jail to take power. The bad news from the Civil War fronts lost their importance. Even the fall of Munich, captured by General Hoffmann on 1 May, seemed rather unimportant by comparison with the revolutionary victories now expected to follow in Central Europe, Bohemia, Italy, and Bulgaria. (However, the massacres at Munich did reinforce the terrorist state of mind, and the atrocities committed at Ufa by Admiral Kolchak's troops, who burned Red prisoners alive, had lately enabled the Chekists to prevail against those Party members who hoped for a greater degree of humanity.)

The Executive of the International was in session at Moscow, with Angelica Balabanova* in charge of the secretariat; actually its political control was managed from Petrograd, by Zinoviev, with whom Karl Radek* and Bukharin* used to come and confer. The Executive held a session also at Petrograd; this was attended by Finns (e.g., Sirola), Bulgarians, the ambassador from Soviet Hungary, Rudniansky, and the

Volga German Klinger. I was present at these meetings, although I had still not joined the Party. I remember that the anarchist William Shatov*, for a short while the military governor of the old capital and later the real leader of the Tenth Army, was also invited. There the superiority of the Russians, compared with the foreign revolutionaries, amazed me: it was immediately obvious. I found Zinoviev's optimism terrifying. He seemed to have no doubts at all: the European Revolution was on the way, and nothing would stop it. I can see him now, at the end of the session, his fingertips playing with the little tassels of silken cord which he wore instead of a tie, wreathed in smiles, and saying about some resolution or other, "Always provided that new revolutions do not come and upset our plans for the forthcoming weeks!" He was setting the tone. Actually, we were a hairbreadth from the disaster.

A regiment on the Estonian front betrayed us; in other words, its officers took it over to the enemy side, put their epaulettes back on, and hanged the Communists. Other officers, also joining the enemy, seized Krasnaya Gorka, one of the forts that dominated the western defenses of Petrograd. A message announced the fall of Kronstadt (falsely). At the Smolny, at the Astoria, in the committees, we had this sudden feeling of disaster and no escape possible except on foot, by road, as the railway had no fuel whatsoever. One moment of panic and Petrograd would have collapsed—there was panic, but not in the normal sense: it was about holding on at all costs or how to sell our hides as dearly as possible. Quite literally we lacked everything and the morale in the city was lamentably low. A Party committee asked me one day to make a speech before some sailors at the Fleet depot. "Why are you asking me to speak when any of you could do it, and better than me?" "Because you're a runt; in these conditions they won't attack you; and also, your French accent will appeal to them." The soldiers and sailors often booed down Party speakers for whose benefit they had invented a comic ritual: the speakers would be sat in a wheelbarrow and taken around the camp to the accompaniment of jeering and whistling. Nothing happened to me. I was too skinny to be wheelbarrowed. The sailors heard me out in relative silence. On the walls of the depot, graffiti mocked Lenin and Trotsky: DRIED FISH

AND SHITTY BREAD. As if more terror was required, the Central Committee sent us Peters who briefly took command of the place, and Stalin who went to inspect the front. Peters was preceded by a sinister reputation: a young Lett with the head of a blond bulldog, and with the reputation of a merciless executioner, having grown up in the climate of repression of the Baltic countries. He had the look of his profession—reserved, sullen, aloof—but I heard him tell only one story and this fitted ill with his deserved reputation. During one of those bad nights which preceded an even more awful dawn, he had phoned the Peter-Paul Fortress. The officer in charge picked up the receiver, completely drunk. Peters was outraged, "That Grisha made me furious! I should have had him shot right away. Drunk on duty, and at such a moment. I screamed at him and it took me ages to calm down again!" At the Executive's table I saw Stalin, a slim cavalry officer, slightly slanting brown eyes, mustache trimmed to the lips, trying to catch Zinoviev's attention. Frightening and banal, like a Caucasian dagger.

The nights were white and the weather superb. Towards one in the morning a faint bluish light lay over the canals, the Neva, the golden spires of the palaces, and the empty squares with their equestrian statues of dead emperors. I went to bed in guardhouses, and did my turn of sentry duty in outlying railway stations, reading Alexander Herzen. Quite a few of us sentries took books with us. I searched people's homes: house by house we sifted apartments, looking for arms and White agents. I could have easily avoided this unpleasant work, but I went off to it with a will, knowing that wherever I went no brutality, thefts, or stupid arrests would take place. I remember a weird exchange of shots on the roofs of high buildings overlooking a sky-blue canal. Men fled before us, firing their revolvers at us from behind the chimney pots. I kept slipping on the sheet-iron roof and my heavy rifle dragged on me frightfully. The men we were after escaped, but I treasured an unforgettable vision of the city, seen at 3:00 a.m. in all its magical paleness.

The city was saved mainly through Grigory Yevdokimov, an exseafarer vigorous and gray-haired, with a muzhik's roughness. Loud of voice, fond of the bottle, he never seemed to admit that a situation

was hopeless. When it seemed impossible for the Moscow-Petrograd railway to operate, since there was no more than two days' supply of dry wood, I heard him exclaim, "Well, they can chop down wood on the way! The journey will be done in twenty hours, no more!" He was the organizer of the city's second line of defense, where the gun batteries were lined up by young girls from the Communist Party.

The actual operations leading to the sailors' capture of the fort of Krasnaya Gorka were directed by Bill Shatov. I was present at a private meeting in his room at the Astoria, which concerned the best method of using the crews of the Fleet. Shatov explained that these merry youngsters were the best fed in the garrison, the best accommodated, and the most appreciated by pretty girls, to whom they could now and then slip a tin of food; consequently none of them was agreeable to fighting for more than a few hours, being concerned to get a comfortable sleep on board ship. Someone suggested that once they were disembarked, the ships should be sent away on some plausible pretext. They would then have to hold the front for twenty-four hours, having no further means of retreat!

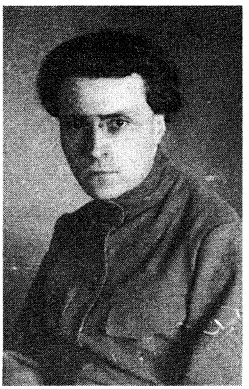
How did Bill Shatov manage to keep his rotundity and good humor? He was the only fat man among us, with a remarkable face, like an American businessman's, clean-shaven and fleshy. Working-class, converted to anarchism by exiles in Canada, a lively and decisive organizer, he was the real leader of the Tenth Red Army. Every time he returned from the front, he loaded us with anecdotes, such as the tale of a certain small-town mayor who, mistaking the Reds for the Whites, and Shatov himself for a colonel, had come to him in the thick of the gunfire to present a complimentary address, specially written for the occasion. Bill knocked him down on the spot. "Just imagine, the idiot had his big medallion from the Tsar hung around his neck!" Later, in 1929 or so, Shatov became one of the builders of the Turkestan-Siberia railway.

Two episodes from these moments come to mind. The vast, deserted anterooms of the Smolny. The International's services got on with their work as best they could. I was in my office when Zinoviev entered, running his fingers through his hair: his gesture when he was worried. "What's the matter, Grigory Yevseevich?"

"The English have landed not far from the border with Estonia. We have nothing to fight them with. Write a few leaflets for me immediately, for the troops we are deploying—stirring, direct, and short! OK? It's our strongest weapon..."

I wrote these leaflets, had them printed right away in three different languages and our best weapon was ready! Luckily, it was a false alarm. But, generally speaking, it has to be said that propaganda was very effective. We used a simple and truthful language for men who, when deployed, often did not understand why they were being sent to fight again, only wanted to go home, and to whom no one had ever addressed such basic truths. The Great War had been fought with idiotic propaganda that was daily belied by events. We learnt of a disaster: three Red destroyers had just been sunk in the gulf of Finland, either by the English or by a minefield. The crews of the Fleet commemorated the sacrifice of their drowned comrades who died for the revolution. Then we discovered, secretly, that they had perished in an act of betrayal. The three destroyers were going over to the enemy when a wrong course took them into a minefield. It was decided to keep it quiet.

For several months we experienced a lull. The summer brought us inexpressible relief. Even the famine was a little diminished. I made frequent journeys to Moscow. Its circular, leafy boulevards were filled in the evening with a buzzing, amorous crowd, dressed in bright colors. There was very little illumination at nightfall, and the hum of the crowd could be heard from far away in the twilight and afterwards in the darkness. Soldiers from the Civil War, girls from the old bourgeoisie who packed the Soviet offices during the day, refugees from the massacres in the Ukraine, where nationalist bands were systematically slaughtering the Jewish population, men wanted by the Cheka, plotting in broad daylight two steps from the torture-cellars, Imagist poets and Futurist painters—all of them could be seen scurrying to live.



Serge in 1919

In Tverskaya Street there were several poets' cafés; it was the time when Sergei Yesenin* was becoming famous, sometimes writing his splendid poetry in chalk on the walls of the now secularized Monastery of the Passion. I met him in a seedy café. Over-powdered, over-painted women, leaning on the marble slabs, cigarettes between their fingers, drank coffee made from roasted oats; men clad in black leather, frowning and tight-lipped, with heavy revolvers at their belts, had their arms around the women's waists. These fellows knew what it was to live rough, knew the taste of blood, the odd, painful impact of a bullet in the flesh, and it all made them appreciative of the poems, incanted and almost sung, whose violent images jostled each other as though in a fight.

When I saw Yesenin for the first time, I disliked him. Twenty-four years old, he mixed with the women, ruffians, and ragamuffins from the dark corners of Moscow. A drinker, his voice was hoarse, his eyes worn, his handsome young face puffed and polished, his golden-blond hair flowing in waves around his temples. He was surrounded by sheer glory: the old Symbolist poets recognized him as an equal, the intelligentsia acclaimed his slim volumes, and the folk of the street sang his poems! He deserved all of it. Dressed in a white silk smock, he would mount the stage and begin to declaim. The affectation, the calculated elegance, the alcoholic's voice, the puffy face, everything prejudiced me against him, and the atmosphere of a decomposing Bohemianism, entangling its homosexuals and exotics with our militants, all but disgusted me. Yet, like everyone else, I yielded in a single instant to the positive sorcery of that ruined voice, of a poetry that came from the inmost depths of the man and the age.

Coming from there, I used to stop in front of the glass cases, some of them with long cracks from last year's bullets, where Mayakovsky* was sticking his agitational posters against the Entente: "The Song of the Flea," the White generals, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and capitalism, this last being symbolized by a potbellied character in a top hat, smoking an enormous cigar. A small volume by Ehrenburg* (now on the run) was in circulation: it was a *Prayer for Russia*, so ravished and crucified by the Revolution. Lunacharsky,* People's Commissar for

Public Education, had given the Futurist painters a free hand in the decoration of Moscow; they had transformed the stalls in one of the markets into gigantic flowers. The great lyric tradition, hitherto confined to literary circles, was seeking fresh outlets in the public squares. The poets were learning to declaim or chant their work before huge audiences from the streets; by this approach their personal tone was regenerated and their preciosity gave way to power and fervor.

As autumn approached, we in Petrograd, the frontline city, sensed the return of danger, this time perhaps mortal. True enough, we were accustomed to it. In Tallinn (Reval), Estonia, a British general was setting up a provisional government for Russia, at whose head he placed a certain Mr. Liasonov, a big oil capitalist. That at any rate was not dangerous. In Helsinki, the exiles had a White Stock Exchange where they still quoted banknotes bearing the Tsar's effigy. (This was pretty good, since we used to print them specially for the poor fools.) Here, too, they sold the real estate of Soviet towns and the shares of socialized enterprises; a ghost capitalism was struggling to survive over there. That was not dangerous either. What was really dangerous was typhus and famine. The Red divisions on the Estonian front, exposed to lice and hunger, were demoralized. In the shattered trenches I saw emaciated, dejected soldiers, absolutely incapable of any further effort. The cold rains of autumn came, and the war went by dismally for those poor fellows, without hope, or victories, or boots, or provisions; for a number of them it was the sixth year of war, and they had made the Revolution to gain peace! They felt as though they were in one of the rings of Hell. Vainly the *ABC of Communism* explained that they would have land, justice, peace, and equality, when in the near future the world revolution was achieved. Our divisions were slowly melting away under the ghastly sun of misery.

A most mischievous movement had grown up inside the armies engaged in the Civil War, White, Red, and the rest: that of the Greens. These borrowed their title from the forests in which they took refuge, uniting deserters from all the armies that were now unwilling to fight for anyone, whether Generals or Commissars: these would fight now only for themselves, simply to stay out of the Civil War. The movement existed over the whole of Russia. We knew that in the for-

ests of the Pskov region, the Greens' effective forces were on the increase, numbering several tens of thousands. Well organized, complete with their own general staff, and supported by the peasants, they were eating the Red Army away. Cases of desertion to the enemy had also been multiplying ever since it became known that the generals were giving white bread to their troops. Fortunately the caste-outlook of the officers of the old regime neutralized the trouble: they persisted in wearing epaulettes, demanding the military salute, and being compulsorily addressed as "Your Honor," thus exhaling such a stench of the past that our deserters, once they had fed themselves, deserted again and came back to receive a pardon, if they did not join the Greens. On both sides of the front line numbers fluctuated constantly.

On 11 October the White army under General Yudenich captured Yamburg, on the Estonian border; in fact it encountered hardly any resistance. Our skeletons of soldiery (or, to be exact, all that was left of them) broke and fled. It was a nasty moment. General Denikin's National Army was now occupying the whole of the Ukraine and on the way to capturing Orel. Admiral Kolchak, the "Supreme Head" of the counterrevolution, was in control of all Siberia and now threatened the Urals. The British occupied Archangel, where one of the oldest Russian revolutionaries, Chaikovsky, a former friend of my father, presided over a "democratic" government that shot the Reds without quarter. The French and Romanians had just been chased out of Odessa by a Black (anarchist) army, but a French fleet was in the Black Sea. Soviet Hungary had perished. In short, when we drew up the balance sheet it seemed most probable that the Revolution was approaching its death agony, that a White military dictatorship would soon prevail, and that we should be all hanged or shot. This frank conviction, far from spreading discouragement, galvanized our spirit of resistance.

My friend Mazin (Lichtenstadt) went off to the front, after a talk we both had with Zinoviev. "The front line is everywhere," we told him. "Out in the scrubland or the marshes you will die soon and without achieving anything. Men better fitted for war than you are needed for that, and there is no shortage of them." But he insisted. He told me afterwards that since we were facing utter ruin, and were probably

doomed, he saw no point in gaining a mere few month's reprieve for his own life, doing jobs of organization, publishing, etc., which were fruitless from now on; and that, at an hour when so many men were dying quite uselessly out in the wilds, he felt a horror of Smolny offices, committees, printed matter, and the Hotel Astoria. I argued with him that it was our overriding duty to hold on, to live, not to expose ourselves to danger except in the direst necessity; that we would have a chance to get ourselves killed by using up the last bullets. (I had just returned from what was a more or less deadly mission, cut short by Bukharin. I had not felt fear nor was I afraid to show fear, but I did realize that there were so many reasons to go on fighting that even intelligent heroics appeared absurd to me.) I imagined that the war service of this myopic intellectual, absentminded over the smallest things, was destined to last a fortnight at the most. Mazin-Lichtenstadt departed, and made war for a little longer than that. Zinoviev, doubtless wishing to save him, had him appointed political commissar to the Sixth Division, which was barring Yudenich's path. The Sixth Division broke under fire and was overwhelmed; its remnants fled in disarray over the sodden roads. Bill Shatov, scandalized, showed me a letter from Mazin that said: "The Sixth Division no longer exists; there is only a fleeing mob over which I have no more control. The command no longer exists. I demand to be relieved of my political functions and given a private's rifle." "He is mad!" Shatov exclaimed. "If all our commissars were so romantic, a fine state we should be in! I'm giving him a dressing-down by telegram and I won't mince my words, I assure you!" What I saw of the rout made me understand Mazin's reaction. There's nothing like a defeated army, overcome by panic, sensing betrayal in the air, it ceases to obey orders and becomes a herd of frightened men, ready to lynch anyone daring to stand in their way, flinging their weapons into the ditches ... Such a feeling of hopelessness emanates from it and nervous panic is so subtly and savagely contagious that those who still have courage are left only with the despairing option of suicide.

Vladimir Ossipovich Mazin did as he had written: he renounced his command, picked up a rifle, collected a little band of Communists, and tried to stop both the rout and the enemy simultaneously. There

were four of these determined comrades on the edge of a forest; one of the four was his orderly, who had refused to desert him. These four engaged in furious combat, alone against the White cavalry, and were killed. Much later, some peasants pointed out to us the spot where the commissar had fired his last bullets before falling. They had buried him there. Four corpses, dried up by the earth, were taken back to Petrograd; one of them, a little soldier beaten to death with a rifle butt, his skull battered in, was still making to protect his face with his stiffened arm. I identified Mazin by his fine fingernails, a former prisoner from Schlüsselburg identified him by his teeth. We laid him in his grave in the Field of Mars. (This was after our victory, a victory that I think none of us then believed in.)

Vladimir Ossipovich Mazin

Naturally, like all the comrades, I performed a host of functions. I ran the Romance languages section and publications of the International, I met the foreign delegates who kept arriving by adventurous routes through the blockade's barbed-wire barrier. I carried out a Commissar's duties over the archives of the old Ministry of the Interior, i.e., the Okhrana. I was at the same time a trooper in the Communist battalion of the Second District, and a member of the Defense staff, where I was engaged in smuggling between Russia and Finland. From honest dealers in Helsinki we would buy excellent weapons, Mauser pistols in wooden cases which were delivered to us on a "quiet sector" of the front (quiet because of this minor traffic) fifty or so kilometers from Leningrad. To pay for these useful commodities, we printed whole casefuls of beautiful 500-ruble notes, watery in appearance, with the image of Catherine the Great and the signature of a bank director as dead as his bank, his social order, and the Empress Catherine. Case for case, the exchange was made silently in a wood of somber firs—it was really the maddest commercial transaction imaginable. Obviously the recipients of the Imperial banknotes were

taking out a mortgage on our deaths, at the same time furnishing us with the means for our defense.

The archives of the Okhrana, the late political police of the autocracy, presented a serious problem. In no event were they to be allowed to fall again into reactionary hands. They contained biographies and even excellent historical dissertations on the revolutionary parties; if we were to undergo a defeat, followed by White terror and illegal resistance (for which we were making preparation), the whole collection would provide precious weapons for tomorrow's hangmen and firing squads. To add another relatively minor inconvenience, some scholarly and sympathetic archivists, who also anticipated our coming end, were surreptitiously pilfering these stirring old documents, out of an entirely admirable concern to see that they were not destroyed. There were no railway trucks to convey them to Moscow, and no time either, since Petrograd might fall any week now. While barricades were being raised at street corners, I saw to the packing of those boxes considered the most interesting, so that I could try to get them out at the last moment; and I ordered arrangements to be made whereby, either in the Senate building or at the station itself, everything would be burnt and blown up by a squad of trusted comrades at the moment when any alternative course would cease to be possible. The archivists (from whom I concealed this plan) suspected that something was afoot and were sick with fear and vexation. Leonid Borisovich Krassin came on behalf of the Central Committee to inquire about the measures that were being taken to save or destroy the police archives, in which he was a figure of perceptible importance. A perfect gentleman, dressed in bourgeois style with a genuine concern for correctness and elegance, he passed through our headquarters, which were full of workers in cloth caps and overcoats with cartridge belts. A handsome man, with a beard neatly trimmed to a broad point, an intellectual in the grand style, he was at the time of our snatched conversation so tired that I thought he was sometimes asleep on his feet.

On 17 October Yudenich captured Gatchina, about twenty-five miles from Petrograd. Two days later his advance forces entered Ligovo, on the city's outskirts, about nine miles away. Bill Shatov stormed away: "The principles of military science, which my experts

never stop reminding me of, require Divisional Headquarters to be such-and-such many miles from the firing line. Here we are, two hundred yards away! I told them, 'To hell with your scientific principles!'"

It seemed quite plainly to be our death-agony. There were no trains and no fuel for evacuation, and scarcely a few dozen cars. We had sent the children of known militants off to the Urals; they were traveling there now in the first snows, from one famished village to the next, not knowing where to halt. We arranged new identities for ourselves, trying to "change our faces." It was relatively easy for those with beards, who only had to shave, but as for the others... An efficient girl-comrade, lively and affable as a child, was setting up secret arms depots. I no longer slept at the Astoria, whose ground floor was lined with sandbags and machine guns against a siege; I spent my nights with the Communist troops in the outer defenses. My wife, who was pregnant, resorted to sleeping in an ambulance in the rear, with a case holding a little linen and our most precious possessions, so that we might be reunited during the battle and fight together in the retreat along the Neva.

The plan for the city's internal defense envisaged fighting along the canals dividing the town, a stubborn defense of the bridges, and a final retreat that was quite impracticable. The huge solemn spaces of Petrograd, in their pale autumn melancholy, fitted this atmosphere of inescapable defeat. So deserted was the city that riders could gallop at full speed along the central thoroughfares. The Smolny Institute (once an educational establishment for young ladies of the aristocracy), now the office of the Executive of the Soviet and the Party Committee, presented a stern picture with its show of cannon at the entrance. It is made up of two masses of buildings surrounded by gardens, standing between vast streets and the equally vast turbulence of the Neva, which is straddled not far from there by an iron bridge. There is a former convent, whose baroque architecture is charmingly ornate, standing with its church, a rather lofty building with figured belfry turrets; the whole is painted in a bright blue. Next to it is the Institute proper, with pediments and columns on all four sides, a two-floor barracks built by architects who knew of nothing but straight lines, rectangle upon rectangle. The convent housed the Workers' Guards. The great square office rooms, whose windows overlooked

the wastelands of the dying city, were practically empty. A pale, puffy Zinoviev, round-shouldered and quiet-spoken, lived there amidst telephones, in constant communication with Lenin. He pleaded for resistance, but his voice was weakening. The most competent experts, military engineers, and former pupils of the Military School (no less), considered resistance to be quite impossible and made constant reference to the massacres it would entail, just as though the city's surrender or abandonment were not bound to entail a massacre of a more demoralizing character.

The news from the other fronts was so bad that Lenin was reluctant to sacrifice the last available forces in the defense of a doomed city. Trotsky thought otherwise; the Politburo entrusted him with the final initiative. He arrived at almost the last moment and his presence instantly changed the atmosphere at Smolny, as it did when he visited headquarters and the Peter-Paul Fortress, whose commander was Avrov. He must have been a noncommissioned officer and former worker. I saw him laboring away every day, his tunic unbuttoned at the top, his square face deeply lined, his eyes heavily lidded. He would listen vacantly to what you said, then a little light would appear in his ash-gray eyes and he would reply emphatically, "I'll give orders right now" but then a moment later he would add furiously, "But I don't know if they can be carried out!"

Trotsky arrived with his train, that famous train which had been speeding to and fro along the different fronts since the day in the previous year when its engineers orderlies, typists, and military experts had, together with Trotsky, Ivan Smirnov,* and Rosengoltz, retrieved a hopeless situation by winning the battle of Sviazhsk. The train of the Revolutionary War Council's President contained excellent motorcars, a liaison staff, a court of justice, a printshop for propaganda, sanitary squads, and specialists in engineering, provisioning, street fighting, and artillery, all of them men picked in battle, all self-confident, all bound together by friendship and trust, all kept to a strict, vigorous discipline by a leader they admired, all dressed in black leather, red stars on their peaked caps, all exhaling energy. It was a nucleus of resolute and efficiently serviced organizers, who hastened wherever danger demanded their presence.

They took everything in hand, meticulously and passionately. It was magical. Trotsky kept saying, "It is impossible for a little army of fifteen thousand ex-officers to master a working-class capital of seven hundred thousand inhabitants." He had posters put up proclaiming that the city would "defend itself on its own ground," that from now on this was the best strategic method, that the small White Army would be lost in the labyrinth of fortified streets and there meet its grave. In contrast to this determination to win, a French Communist, René Marchand, who had just seen Lenin, told me of Vladimir Ilyich's remark, matter-of-fact and mischievous as usual: "Oh well, we shall have to go underground all over again!" Or was this really so much of a contrast?

I caught glimpses of Trotsky in the street, then at a packed meeting of the Soviet, where he announced the arrival of a division of Bashkirian cavalry that we would launch mercilessly against Finland if Finland budged an inch! (It depended on Finland to deal us the deathblow.) This was an extremely skillful threat, which caused a chill of terror to pass over Helsinki. This session of the Soviet took place beneath the lofty white columns of the Tauride Palace, in the amphitheater of the old Imperial Duma. Trotsky was all tension and energy: he was, besides, an orator of unique quality, whose metallic voice projected a great distance, ejaculating its short sentences that were often sardonic and always infused with a truly spontaneous passion. The decision to fight to the death was taken enthusiastically, and the whole amphitheater raised a song of immense power. I reflected that the psalms sung by Cromwell's Roundheads before their decisive battles must have sounded no different a tone.

Capable regiments of infantry, recalled from the Polish front, now marched through the city to take up their positions in the suburbs. The Bashkirian cavalry, mounted on small, longhaired horses from the steppes, rode in line along the streets. These horsemen, figures from a distant past, swarthy and wearing black sheepskin caps, sang their old songs in guttural voices to an accompaniment of shrill whistling. Sometimes a thin, bespectacled intellectual would ride at their head: he was destined to become the author Konstantin Fedin.* They fought rarely and deplorably, but that was unimportant. Convoys of

provisions, extorted God knows how from God knows where, were arriving too: this was the most efficient weapon. It was rumored that the Whites had tanks. Trotsky had it proclaimed that the infantry was well able to knock tanks out. Certain mysterious but ingenious agitators spread the rumor, which may even have been true, that Yudenich's tanks were made of painted wood. The city was dotted with veritable fortresses; lines of cannon occupied the streets. Material from the underground drainage system was used to build these fortifications, the big pipes from the sewers being particularly handy.

The anarchists were mobilized for the work of defense. Kolabushkin, once a prisoner at Schlüsselburg, was their leading light. The Party gave them arms, and they had a "Black headquarters" in a devastated apartment belonging to a dentist who had fled. There, disorder and comradeship presided above all. There also presided the smile of a fair-haired and intensely charming girl, who came from the Ukraine with reports of frightful massacres and the latest news of Makhno.* Tsvetkova was to die shortly of typhus. She brought a real beam of sunshine into that group of inflamed and embittered men. It was they who, on the night of the worst danger, occupied the printing works of *Pravda*, the Bolshevik paper that they hated, ready to defend it to the death. They discovered two Whites in their midst, armed with hand grenades and about to blow them up. What were they to do? They locked them in a room and looked at each other in embarrassment: "We are jailers, just like the Cheka!" They despised the Cheka with all their hearts. A proposal to shoot these enemy spies was rejected with horror. "What, us to be executioners!"

Finally, my friend Kolabushkin, the ex-convict, at the time one of the organizers of the Republic's fuel supply, was charged with taking them to the Peter-Paul Fortress. This was a poor compromise, since there the Cheka would shoot them within the hour. Once in the Black Guard's motorcar, Kolabushkin, who in the past had made this very same journey himself between a couple of Tsarist gendarmes, saw their trapped faces and remembered the days of his youth. He stopped the car and impulsively told them, "Hop it, you bastards!" Afterwards he came, relieved but vexed, to tell me about those unbearable mo-

ments. "I was a fool, wasn't I?" he asked me. "But you know, all the same, I'm glad of it."

Petrograd was saved on 21 October at the battle of the Pulkovo Heights, some ten miles south of the half-encircled city. Defeat was transformed into a victory so complete that Yudenich's troops rolled back in disorder towards the Estonian frontier. There the Estonians blocked their path. The White Army that had failed to capture Petrograd perished miserably. About 300 workers who had hastened from Schlüsselburg had also blocked the Whites at one critical moment, before being mown down by a body of officers who marched into the fray as though on parade.

Mazin-Lichtenstadt's last message reached me after the battle. It was a letter that he asked me to send on to his wife. It said, "He who sends men to their deaths must see that he himself gets killed."

It was an extraordinary fact, and one that proves how deep-rooted in its causes, both social and psychological (they amount to the same), our resilience was: but the same apparent miracle was achieved simultaneously on all the fronts of the Civil War, although at the end of October and the beginning of November the situation seemed equally hopeless everywhere. During the battle near Pulkovo, the White Army of General Denikin was beaten not far from Voronezh by the Red cavalry, hastily assembled by Trotsky and commanded by a former NCO named Budyenny. On 14 November Admiral Kolchak, the "Supreme Head," lost Omsk, his capital in western Siberia. Salvation had come.

The White disaster was the price of two cardinal errors: their failure to have the intelligence and courage to carry out agrarian reform in the territories they wrested from the Revolution, and their reinstatement everywhere of the ancient trinity of generals, high clergy, and landlords. A boundless confidence returned to us. I remembered what Mazin said, in the worst days of our famine when we saw old folk collapsing in the street, some holding out a little tin saucepan in their emaciated fingers. "All the same," he told me, "we are the greatest power in the world. Alone, we are bringing the world a new principle of justice and the rational organization of work. Alone, in all this war-sick Europe where nobody wants to fight any more, we are able to

form new armies, and tomorrow we shall be able to wage wars that are truly just. Their house of cards must fall; the longer it lasts, the more misery and bloodshed it will cost." By "the house of cards" we meant the Versailles Treaty that had just been signed in June 1919.

Together with Maxim Gorky, P. E. Shchegolev, the historian, and Novorusky, the veteran of the People's Will Party, we founded the first Museum of the Revolution. Zinoviev had a large part of the Winter Palace allotted to us. Like most of the Party leaders, he really wanted to make it a museum for Bolshevik propaganda but, anxious to have the support of the revolutionary intellectuals, and at least the appearance of a scientific concern, he allowed us to make an honest beginning. I continued to investigate the Okhrana archives. The frightful mass of documents that I found there afforded a unique kind of psychological interest, but the practical bearing of my research was perhaps even greater. For the first time the entire mechanism of an authoritarian empire's police repression had fallen into the hands of revolutionaries. Thorough study of this material could furnish the militants of other countries with useful clues.[3] Despite our enthusiasm and our sense of right, we were not certain that one day reaction would not drive us back. We were, indeed, more or less convinced to the contrary: it was a generally accepted thesis, which Lenin stated several times, that Russia, agricultural and backward (from an industrial standpoint) as it was, could not create a lasting Socialist system for itself by its own efforts, and that consequently we should be overcome sooner or later unless the European revolution, or at the very least the Socialist revolution in Central Europe, assured Socialism of a broader and more viable base. Finally, we knew that former police spies were at work among us, most of them ready to resume their services to the counterrevolution; this implied grave danger for us.

In the first days of the March 1917 Revolution, the Petrograd Palace of Justice had gone up in flames. We knew that the destruction of its archives, its anthropometric cards and collection of secrets had been the work both of the criminal underworld, which was interested in destroying these documents, and of police agents. At Kronstadt a

3. See Serge's *What Every Radical Should Know About State Repression.*

"revolutionary" who was also a police spy had carried off the Security archives and burnt them. The Okhrana's secret collection contained between thirty thousand and forty thousand records of agents provocateurs active over the last twenty years. By devoting ourselves to a simple calculation of the probabilities of decease, and various other eliminations, and taking account of the three thousand or so that had been unmasked through the patient work of the archivists, we estimated that several thousand former secret agents were still active in the Revolution—at least five thousand, according to the historian Shchegolev, who told me of the following incident which happened in a town on the Volga.

A commission, composed of known members of the different parties of the extreme Left and the Left in general, was interrogating the leading officials of the Imperial police on this question of provocation. The head of the political police apologized for not being able to name two of his ex-agents since they were members of this very commission; he would rather that these gentlemen obeyed the voice of their conscience and identified themselves! And two of the "revolutionaries" stood up in confusion.

The old secret agents, all of them initiates into the political life, could pretend to be seasoned revolutionaries; since they were not at all troubled by scruples, they found it to their own advantage to rally to the ruling party, in which it was easy for them to obtain good positions. Consequently they played a certain role in the system: we guessed that some of them were under orders to select and follow the worst possible policies, engineering excesses and sowing discredit. It was extremely hard to unmask them. As a rule the records were classified under pseudonyms, and assiduous cross-checking was necessary before identification could be established. For example, in 1912 in the revolutionary organizations of Moscow (which were by no means mass organizations) there were fifty-five police agents: seventeen Social-Revolutionaries, twenty Menshevik or Bolshevik Social-Democrats, three anarchists, eleven students, and several Liberals. In the same period the leader of the Bolshevik fraction in the Duma, and spokesman for Lenin, was a police spy, Malinovsky. The head of the Social-Revolutionary Party's terrorist organization, a member of its Central

Committee, was an Okhrana agent, Evno Azev—this from 1903 to 1908, at the time of the most sensational assassinations. Somewhere around 1930, to cut a long story short, several former police agents were finally unmasked among the Leningrad leadership! I found an extraordinary file, one in need of no deciphering, No. 378: Julia Orestovna Serova, wife of a Bolshevik deputy in the Second Imperial Duma; he was a fine militant who had been shot in 1918 at Chita. The catalogue of Serova's services, listed in a report to the Minister, revealed that she had betrayed caches of arms and literature; had Rykov,* Kamenev, and many others arrested; and spied for a great length of time on the Party committees. Having at last fallen under suspicion and been sent packing she wrote, in February 1917, a few weeks before the fall of the autocracy, to the head of the secret police asking to be reemployed "in view of the great events that are drawing near." She got married again, to a Bolshevik worker, and so was once again in a position to carry on her activities. The letters revealed a woman of practical intelligence, zealous, greedy for money, and perhaps hysterical. One evening, in a circle of friends having tea, we discussed this particular psychological case. An old woman-militant stood up flabbergasted: "Serova? But I just met her in town! She's actually married again, to a comrade in the Vyborg district!" Serova was arrested and shot.

The psychology of the police spy was usually double-natured. Gorky showed me a letter that one of them, still at large, had written to him. The gist of it ran: "I hated myself, but I knew that my little betrayals would not stop the Revolution from marching on." The Okhrana's instructions advised its minions to seek out those revolutionaries who were fainthearted, embittered, or disappointed, to make use of personal rivalries, and to assist the advancement of skillful agents by eliminating the most talented militants. The old barrister Kozlovsky, who had been the first People's Commissar for Justice, told me his impressions of Malinovsky. The former Bolshevik leader in the Duma returned to Russia from Germany in 1918, even after his unmasking and, presenting himself at Smolny, asked to be arrested. "Malinovsky? Don't know the name!" replied the commandant of the guard. "Go and explain yourself to the Party Committee!" Kozlovsky

interrogated him; Malinovsky said that he could not live outside the Revolution: "I have been a double-dealer despite my own best feelings. I want to be shot!" He maintained this attitude in front of the revolutionary tribunal. Krylenko ruthlessly demanded sentence ("The adventurer is playing his last card!"), and Malinovsky was shot in the gardens of the Kremlin. Many indications led me to believe that he was absolutely sincere and that if he had been allowed to live, he would have served as faithfully as the others. But what confidence could the others have in him?

Gorky tried to save the lives of the police spies, who in his eyes were the repositories of a unique social and psychological experience. "These men are a sort of monster, worthy of preservation for research." He used the same arguments to defend the lives of high officials in the Tsarist political police. I remember a conversation on these matters that wandered onto the question of the necessity for applying the death penalty to children. The Soviet leaders were concerned at the scale of juvenile crime. Certain children, more or less abandoned, formed actual gangs. These were put into children's homes, where they still starved; then they would abscond and resume a life of crime. Olga, a pretty little girl of fourteen, had several child murders and several absconsions on her record. She organized burglaries in apartments where a child had been left alone by the parents. She would talk to it through the door, win its confidence, and get it to open the door to her... What could be done with her? Gorky argued for the establishment of colonies for child criminals in the North, where life is rough and adventure always at hand. I do not know what became of the idea.

We put together a fairly complete documentary picture of the activities of the Okhrana's Secret Service abroad. It had agents among immigrants everywhere as well as among the journalists and politicians of many countries. The senior official Rachkovsky, on a tour of duty in Paris at the time of the Franco-Russian alliance, made the well-known comment about the "sordid venality of the French press." We also found in the archives meticulous histories of the revolutionary parties, written by chiefs of police. These have since been published. Pored over in the malachite halls of the Winter Palace, whose windows overlooked the Peter-Paul Fortress, our very own Bastille,

these extraordinary tools of a police state's machinery of repression should give pause for thought. They reveal the ultimate powerlessness of repression when it seeks to impede the development of a historical necessity and to defend a regime that is against the needs of society. However powerfully equipped it might be, all it can achieve is to add to the suffering by gaining a little time.

The Civil War seemed about to end. General Denikin's National Army was in flight across the Ukraine. In Siberia Admiral Kolchak's forces, encircled by the Red partisans, were in retreat. The idea of a normalization of life was exerting increasing pressure within the Party. Riazanov tirelessly demanded the abolition of the death penalty. The Cheka was unpopular. In the middle of January 1920 Dzerzhinsky, with the approval of Lenin and Trotsky, recommended the abolition of the death sentence throughout the country, except in districts where there were military operations.

On 17 January the decree was passed by the Government and signed by Lenin as President of the Council of People's Commissars. For several days the prisons, crammed with suspects, had been living in tense expectation. They knew immediately of the tremendous good news, the end of the Terror; the decree had still not appeared in the newspapers. On the 18th or the 19th some of the comrades at Smolny told me in hushed voices of the tragedy of the preceding night—no one mentioned it openly. While the newspapers were printing the decree, the Petrograd Chekas were liquidating their stock! Cartload after cartload of suspects had been driven outside the city during the night, and then shot, heap upon heap. How many? In Petrograd between 150 and 200; in Moscow, it was said, between 200 and 300. In the dawn of the days that followed, the families of the massacred victims came to search that ghastly, freshly dug ground, looking for any relics, such as buttons or scraps of stocking, that could be gathered there.

The Chekists had presented the Government with a fait accompli. Much later I became personally acquainted with one of those responsible for the Petrograd massacre: I will call him Leonidov. "We thought," he told me "that if the People's Commissars were getting converted to humanitarianism, that was their business. Our business was to crush the counterrevolution forever, and they could shoot us

afterwards if they felt like it!" It was a frightful and tragic example of occupational psychosis. Leonidov, when I knew him, was in any case definitely half-insane. In all likelihood the incorrigible counterrevolutionaries were only a very minute percentage of the victims. A few months later, during my wife's confinement, I had a conversation with a sick woman who had just given birth to a stillborn child. Her husband, the engineer Trotsky or Troytsky, had been shot during that abominable night. He was a former Social-Revolutionary who had taken part in the 1905 Revolution, and had been imprisoned for "speculation," that is, for a single purchase of sugar on the black market. I verified these facts.

Even at Smolny, this drama was shrouded in utter mystery. However, it redounded to the regime's profound discredit. It was becoming clear, to me and to others, that the suppression of the Cheka and the reintroduction of regular tribunals and rights of defense were from now on preconditions for the Revolution's own safety. But we could do absolutely nothing. The Politburo, then composed (if I am not mistaken) of Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, and Bukharin, deliberated the question without daring to answer it, being itself, I have no doubt, the victim of a certain psychosis born of fear and ruthless authority. Against the Party the anarchists were right when they inscribed on their black banners, "There is no worse poison than power"—meaning absolute power. From now on the psychosis of absolute power was to captivate the great majority of the leadership, especially at the lower levels. I could give countless examples. It was a product of the inferiority complex of the exploited, the enslaved, the humiliated of the past; of the autocracy's tradition, unwittingly reproduced at each stage; of the unconscious grudges of former convicts and gallows birds of the imperial prisons; of the destruction of human kindness by the war and the civil war; of fear and of the decision to fight to the death. These feelings were inflamed by the atrocities of the White Terror. At Perm, Admiral Kolchak had 4,000 workers killed out of a population of 55,000. In Finland, the reaction had massacred between 15,000 and 17,000 Reds. Just in the small town of Proskurov several thousand Jews had been slaughtered. This news, these accounts, these mind-boggling statistics were a daily diet. Otto Korvin,

with his friends, had just been hanged in Budapest before an excited crowd of society people. However, I remain convinced that the Socialist revolution would nevertheless have been much stronger and clearer if those who held supreme power had persevered in defending and applying a principle of humanity towards the defeated enemy with as much energy as they did in overcoming him. I know they had an inkling of this but did not have the will to carry it out. I know the greatness of these men, but they, who belonged to the future, were in this respect prisoners of the past.

The spring of 1920 opened with a victory—the capture of Archangel, now evacuated by the British—and then, all at once, the outlook changed. Once again there was peril, immediate and mortal: the Polish invasion. In the files of the Okhrana I had photographs of Pilsudski, condemned years ago for plotting against the Tsar's life. I met a doctor who had attended Pilsudski in a St. Petersburg hospital where he had pretended to be mad, with a rare skill, in order to get away. Himself a revolutionary and a terrorist, he was now hurling his legions against us. A wave of anger and enthusiasm rose against him. Brussilov and Polivanov, old Tsarist generals who by some accident had escaped execution, volunteered to fight in response to an appeal by Trotsky. I saw Gorky burst into tears on a balcony in the Nevsky Prospect, haranguing a battalion off to the front. "When will we stop all this killing and bleeding?" he would mutter under his bristling mustache.

The death penalty was reintroduced and, under the stimulus of defeat, the Chekas were given enlarged powers. The Poles were entering Kiev. Zinoviev kept saying, "Our salvation lies in the International," and Lenin agreed with him. At the height of the war the Second Congress of the Communist International was hastily summoned. I worked literally day and night to prepare for it since, thanks to my knowledge of languages and the Western world, I was practically the only person available to perform a whole host of duties. I met Lansbury, the English pacifist, and John Reed* on their arrival. I hid a delegate of Hungarian Left Communists, who were in opposition to Béla Kun and in some kind of liaison with Rakovsky.* We published the International's periodical in four languages. We sent innumerable secret mes-

sages abroad by various adventurous routes. I translated Lenin's messages, and also the book that Trotsky had just written in his military train, *Terrorism and Communism*, which emphasized the necessity for a long dictatorship "in the period of transition to socialism," for several decades at least. Trotsky's rigid ideas, with their schematism and voluntarism, disturbed me a little. Everything was scarce: staff, paper, ink, even bread, as well as facilities for communication. All we received in the way of foreign newspapers were a few copies bought in Helsinki by smugglers who crossed the front lines especially for the purpose. I paid them 100 rubles per copy. On occasions when one of their number had been killed they came to ask for extra money, at which we did not demur. In Moscow, organizational activity was proceeding at an equally feverish pace under the supervision of Angelica Balabanova and Bukharin.

I met Lenin when he came to Petrograd for the first session of the Congress. We had tea together in a small reception room in the Smolny. Yevdokimov and Angel Pestaña, the delegate from the Spanish CNT, were with me when Lenin came in. He beamed, shaking the hands that were outstretched to him, passing from one salutation to the next. Yevdokimov and he embraced one another gaily, gazing straight into each other's eyes, happy as overgrown children. Vladimir Ilyich was wearing one of his old jackets dating back to his emigration, perhaps brought back from Zurich; I saw it on him in all seasons. Practically bald, his cranium high and bulging, his forehead strong, he had commonplace features: an amazingly fresh and pink face, a little reddish beard, slightly jutting cheekbones, eyes horizontal but apparently slanted because of the laughter lines, a gray-green gaze at people, and a surpassing air of geniality and cheerful malice.

In the Kremlin he still occupied a small apartment built for a palace servant. In the recent winter he, like everyone else, had had no heating. When he went to the barber's he took his turn, thinking it unseemly for anyone to give way to him. An old housekeeper looked after his rooms and did his mending. He knew that he was the Party's foremost brain and recently, in a grave situation, had used no threat worse than that of resigning from the Central Committee so as to appeal to the rank and file! He craved a tribune's popularity, stamped

with the seal of the masses' approval, devoid of any show or ceremony. His manners and behavior betrayed not the slightest inkling of any taste for authority; what showed through was only the urgency of the devoted technician who wants the work to be done, and done quickly and well. Also in evidence was his forthright resolve that the new institutions, weak though they might be to the point of a merely symbolic existence, must nevertheless be respected.

On that day, or perhaps the following one, he spoke for several hours at the first formal session of the Congress, under the white colonnade of the Tauride Palace. His report dealt with the historical situation consequent upon the Versailles Treaty. Quoting abundantly from Maynard Keynes, Lenin established the insolvency of a Europe carved up arbitrarily by victorious imperialisms, and the impossibility of any lengthy endurance by Germany of the burdens that had been so idiotically imposed upon her; he concluded that a new European revolution, which was destined also to involve the colonial peoples of Asia, must be inevitable.

He was neither a great orator nor a first-rate lecturer. He employed no rhetoric and sought no demagogical effects. His vocabulary was that of a newspaper article, and his technique included diverse forms of repetition, all with the aim of driving in ideas thoroughly, as one drives in a nail. He was never boring, on account of his mimic's liveliness and the reasoned conviction which drove him. His customary gestures consisted of raising his hand to underline the importance of what he had said, and then bending towards the audience, smiling and earnest, his palms spread out in an act of demonstration: "It is obvious, isn't it?" Here was a man of a basic simplicity, talking to you honestly with the sole purpose of convincing you, appealing exclusively to your judgment, to facts and sheer necessity. "Facts have hard heads," he was fond of saying. He was the embodiment of plain common sense, so much so that he disappointed the French delegates, who were used to impressive Parliamentary joustings. "When you see Lenin at close quarters, he loses much of his glamour," I was told by one French deputy, an eloquent skeptic positively bursting with witty epigrams.

Zinoviev had commissioned Isaac Brodsky to paint a large canvas

of this historic session. Brodsky made sketches. Years later the painter was still working on his canvas, altering the faces of those present to those of others—to new dubious ones—as the crises and the oppositions modified the composition of the Executive of the day.

The Comintern's* Second Congress took up the rest of its work in Moscow. The Congress staff and the foreign delegates lived in the Hotel Delovoy Dvor, centrally situated at the end of a wide boulevard, one side of which was lined by the white embattled rampart of Kitay-Gorod. Medieval gateways topped by an ancient turret formed the approach to the nearby Varvarka, where the first of the Romanovs had lived. From there we came out into the Kremlin, a city within a city, every entrance guarded by sentries who checked our passes. There, in the palaces of the old autocracy, in the midst of ancient Byzantine churches, lay the headquarters of the Revolution's double arm, the Soviet Government and the International. The only city the foreign delegates never got to know (and their incuriosity in this respect disturbed me) was the real, living Moscow, with its starvation rations, its arrests, its sordid prison episodes, its behind-the-scenes racketeering. Sumptuously fed amidst universal misery (although, it is true, too many rotten eggs turned up at mealtimes), shepherded from museums to model nurseries, the representatives of international Socialism seemed to react like holiday-makers or tourists within our poor Republic, flayed and bleeding with the siege. I discovered a novel variety of insensitivity: Marxist insensitivity. Paul Levi,* a leading figure in the German Communist Party, an athletic and self-confident figure, told me outright that "for a Marxist, the internal contradictions of the Russian Revolution were nothing to be surprised at." This was doubtless true, except that he was using this general truth as a screen to shut away the sight of immediate fact, which has an importance all its own. Most of the Marxist Left, now Bolshevized, adopted this complacent attitude. The words "dictatorship of the proletariat" functioned as a magical explanation for them, without it ever occurring to them to ask where this dictator of a proletariat was, what it thought, felt, and did.

The Social-Democrats, by contrast, were notable for their critical spirit and for their incomprehension. Among the best of them (I am

thinking of the Germans Däumig,* Crispien,* and Dittmann*), their peaceful, bourgeoisified socialist humanism was so offended by the Revolution's harsh climate that they were incapable of thinking straight. The anarchist delegates, with whom I held many discussions, had a healthy revulsion from "official truths" and the trappings of power, and a passionate interest in actual life; but, as the adherents of an essentially emotional approach to theory, who were ignorant of political economy and had never faced the problem of power, they found it practically impossible to achieve any theoretical understanding of what was going on. They were excellent comrades, more or less at the stage of the romantic arguments for the "universal revolution" that the libertarian artisans had managed to frame between 1848 and 1860, before the growth of modern industry and its proletariat. Among them were: Angel Pestaña of the Barcelona CNT, a watchmaker and a brave popular leader, slender in build, with beautiful dark eyes and a small mustache of the same hue; Armando Borghi, of the Italian Unione Sindicale, with his fine face, bearded, young, and Mazzini-like, and his fervent but velvety voice; Augustin Souchy, redhaired and with an old trooper's face, the delegate from the Swedish and German syndicalists; Lepetit, a sturdy navvy from the French CGT and *Le Libertaire*, merry but mistrustful and questioning, who suddenly swore that "in France the revolution would be made quite differently!" Lenin was very anxious to have the support of "the best of the anarchists."

To tell the truth, outside Russia and perhaps Bulgaria, there were no real Communists anywhere in the world. The old schools of revolution, and the younger generation that had emerged from the war, were both at an infinite distance from the Bolshevik mentality. The bulk of these men were symptomatic of obsolete movements that had been quite outrun by events, combining an abundance of good intentions with a scarcity of talent. The French Socialist Party was represented by Marcel Cachin* and L.-O. Frossard,* both of them highly Parliamentary in their approach. Cachin was, as usual, sniffing out the direction of the prevailing wind. Ever mindful of his personal popularity, he was shifting to the Left, after having been a supporter of the "Sacred Union" during the war and a backer, on behalf of the

French Government, of Mussolini's jingoist campaigns in Italy: this was in 1916. On their way, Cachin and Frossard had stopped off in Warsaw for talks with the Polish Socialists who supported Pilsudski's aggression against the revolution. When this became known Trotsky insisted that they be asked to leave without delay—and we never saw them again. The expulsion of "these politicians" produced widespread satisfaction. The Paris Committee of the Third International had sent Alfred Rosmer; he of the Ibsenesque surname was a syndicalist, a devoted internationalist, and an old personal friend of Trotsky. Beneath his half-smile Rosmer incarnated the qualities of vigilance, discretion, silence, and dedication. His colleague from the same Committee was Raymond Lefebvre, a tall sharp-featured young man who had carried stretchers at Verdun. A poet and novelist, he had just written his confession of faith as a man home from the trenches, in a luxuriantly poetic style. It was entitled *Revolution or Death!* He spoke for the survivors of a generation now lying buried in communal graves. We quickly became friends.

Of the Italians, I remember the veteran Lazzari, an upright old man whose feverish voice burned with an undying enthusiasm; Serrati's bearded, myopic, and professorial face; Terracini, a young theoretician with a tall, ascetic forehead, who was fated to spend the best years of his life in jail, after giving the world a few pages of his keen intellect; Bordiga,* exuberant and energetic, features blunt, hair thick, black, and bristly, a man quivering under his encumbrance of ideas, experiences, and dark forecasts.

There was Angelica Balabanova, a slender woman whose delicate, already motherly face was framed in a double braid of black hair. An air of extreme gracefulness encompassed her. Perpetually active, she still hoped for an International that was unconfined, openhearted, and rather romantic. Rosa Luxemburg's lawyer, Paul Levi, represented the German Communists; Däumig, Crispien, Dittmann, and another represented Germany's Independent Social-Democratic Party, four likable, rather helpless middlemen, good beer drinkers, one could be sure, and conscientious officials in stodgy, established working-class organizations. It was obvious at first glance that here were no insurgent souls. Of the British, I met only Gallacher, who looked like

a stocky prizefighter. From the United States came Fraina,* later to fall under grave suspicion, and John Reed, the eyewitness of the 1917 Bolshevik uprising, whose book on the Revolution was already considered authoritative. I had met Reed in Petrograd, whence we had organized his clandestine departure through Finland: the Finns had been sorely tempted to finish him off and had confined him for a while in a death trap of a jail. He had just visited some small townships in the Moscow outskirts, and reported what he had seen: a ghost country where only famine was real. He was amazed that Soviet production continued despite everything. Reed was tall, forceful, and matter-of-fact, with a cool idealism and a lively intelligence tinged by humor. Once again I saw Rakovsky, the head of the Soviet Government in a Ukraine that was now prey to hundreds of roving bands: White, Nationalist, Black (or anarchist), Green, and Red. Bearded and dressed in a soldier's worn uniform, he broke into perfect French while he was on the rostrum.

From Bulgaria Kolarov* arrived, huge and somewhat potbellied, whose noble and commanding face bore the stamp of assurance: he blurted out a promise to the Congress that he would take power at home as soon as the International asked him! From Holland there came Wijnkoop,* among others: dark-bearded and long-jawed, apparently aggressive, but destined as it turned out for a career of limitless servility. From India, by way of Mexico, we had the pockmarked Manabendra Nath Roy*: very tall, very handsome, very dark, with very wavy hair, he was accompanied by a statuesque Anglo-Saxon woman who appeared to be naked beneath her flimsy dress. We did not know that in Mexico he had been the target of some unpleasant suspicions; he was fated to become the guiding spirit of the tiny Indian Communist Party, to spend several years in prison, to start activity again, to slander the Opposition with nonsensical insults, to be expelled himself, and then to return to grace—but this was all in the distant future.

The Russians led the dance, and their superiority was so obvious that this was quite legitimate. The only figure in Western Socialism that was capable of equaling them, or even perhaps of surpassing them so far as intelligence and the spirit of freedom were concerned, was Rosa Luxemburg, and she had been battered to death with the butt of

a revolver in January 1919 by German officers. Apart from Lenin, the Russians consisted of Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rakovsky (who, though Romanian by origin, was as much Russified as he was Frenchified), and Karl Radek, recently released from a Berlin prison in which he had courted death and where Leo Jogiches* had been murdered at his side. Trotsky, if he indeed came to the Congress, must have made only rare appearances, for I do not remember having seen him there. He was principally occupied with the state of the fronts, and the Polish front was still ablaze.

The work of the Congress centered upon three issues, and also a fourth which, though even more important, was not touched upon in open session. Lenin was bending every effort to convince the "Left Communists"—Dutch, German, or (like Bordiga) Italian—of the necessity for compromise and participation in electoral and Parliamentary politics. He warned of the danger of their becoming revolutionary sects. In his discussion of the "national and colonial question," Lenin emphasized the possibility, and even necessity, of inspiring Soviet-type revolutions in the Asiatic colonial countries. The experience of Russian Turkestan seemed to lend support to his arguments. He was aiming primarily at India and China; he thought that the blow must be directed at these countries in order to weaken British imperialism, which then appeared as the inveterate foe of the Soviet Republic. The Russians had no further hopes for the traditional Socialist parties of Europe. They judged that the only possible course was to work for splits that would break with the old reformist and Parliamentary leaderships, thereby creating new parties, disciplined and controlled by the Executive in Moscow, which would proceed efficiently to the conquest of power.

Serrati raised serious objections to the Bolshevik tactic of support for the colonial nationalist movements, demonstrating the reactionary and disturbing elements in these movements, which might emerge in the future. It was naturally out of the question to listen to him. Bordiga opposed Lenin on questions of organization and general perspective. Without daring to say so, he was afraid of the influence of the Soviet State on the Communist Parties, and the temptations of compromise, demagogy, and corruption. Above all, he did not believe that

a peasant Russia was capable of guiding the international working-class movement. Beyond doubt, his was one of the most penetrating intellects at the Congress, but only a very tiny group supported him.

The Congress made ready for the splitting of the French Party (at Tours) and the Italian Party (at Leghorn) by laying down twenty-one stringent conditions for the affiliates of the International, or rather twenty-two: the twenty-second, which is not at all well known, excluded Freemasons. The fourth problem was not on the agenda and no trace of it will ever be found in the published accounts, but I saw it discussed with considerable heat by Lenin, in a gathering of foreign delegates in a small room just off the grand, gold-paneled hall of the Imperial Palace. A throne had been bundled away here, and next to this useless piece of furniture a map of the Polish front was displayed on the wall. The rattle of typewriters filled the air. Lenin, jacketed, briefcase under arm, delegates and typists all around him, was giving his views on the march of Tukhachevsky's army on Warsaw. He was in excellent spirits, and confident of victory. Karl Radek, thin, monkey-like, sardonic, and droll, hitched up his oversize trousers (which were always slipping down over his hips), and added, "We shall be ripping up the Versailles Treaty with our bayonets!"

A little later, we were to discover that Tukhachevsky was complaining about the exhaustion of his troops and the lengthening of his lines of communication; that Trotsky considered the offensive to be too rushed and risky in those circumstances; that Lenin had forced the attack to a certain extent by sending Rakovsky and Smilga* as political commissars to accompany Tukhachevsky; and that it would, despite everything, probably have succeeded if Stalin and Budyenny had provided support instead of marching on Lvov to assure themselves of a personal victory.

Defeat came at Warsaw, quite suddenly, just at the moment when the fall of the Polish capital was actually being announced. Apart from some students and a very few workers, the peasantry and proletariat of Poland had not welcomed the Red Army. I remained convinced that the Russians had made a psychological error by including Dzerzhinsky, the man of the Terror, side by side with Marchlewski on the Revolutionary Committee that was to govern Poland. I declared

that, far from firing the popular enthusiasm, the name of Dzerzhinsky would freeze it altogether. That is just what happened. Once more, the westward expansion of the revolution had failed. There was no alternative for the Bolsheviks but to turn east.

Hastily, the Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities of the East was convened at Baku. As soon as the Comintern Congress was over, Zinoviev, Radek, Rosmer, John Reed, and Béla Kun went off to Baku in a special train, whose defense (since they were to pass through perilous country) and command were entrusted to their friend Yakov Blumkin. I shall say more of Blumkin later, apropos of his frightful death. At Baku, Enver Pasha* put in a sensational appearance. A whole hall full of Orientals broke into shouts, with scimitars and *yataghans* brandished aloft: "*Death to imperialism!*" All the same, genuine understanding with the Islamic world, swept as it was by its own national and religious aspirations, was still difficult. Enver Pasha aimed at the creation of an Islamic state in Central Asia; he was to be killed in a battle against the Red cavalry two years later. Returning home from this remarkable trip, John Reed took a great bite out of a watermelon he had bought in a picturesque Daghestan market. As a result he died, from typhoid.

The Moscow Congress is associated for me with more than one such loss. Before I write of these deaths, I would like to say more of the circumstances of the time. My own experience was probably unique, since in this period I maintained a staunch openness in my approach, being in daily contact with official circles, ordinary folk, and the Revolution's persecuted dissenters. Throughout the Petrograd celebrations, I was concerned with the fate of Voline,* though some friends and myself had managed to save his life for the time being. Voline, whose real name was Boris Eichenbaum, was a working-class intellectual who had been one of the founders of the 1905 St. Petersburg Soviet. He had returned from America in 1917 to lead the Russian anarchist movement. He had joined Makhno's "Ukrainian Army of Insurgent Peasants," fought the Whites, resisted the Reds, and tried to organize a free peasants' federation in the region of Gulyai-Polye. After he had caught typhus, he was captured by the Red Army in the course of a Black retreat. We were afraid that he might be shot out of hand. We

succeeded in preventing this extremity by dispatching a Petrograd comrade straight to the spot; he had the prisoner transferred to Moscow. Now I had no sure news of him: I was at the time, together with the Comintern delegates, watching the performance of an authentic Soviet mystery play in the court inside the old Exchange. We saw the Paris Commune raise its red banners, then perish; we saw Jaurès assassinated, and the audience cried out in grief; we saw, at last, the joyful and victorious Revolution in triumph over the world. The invisible presence of the persecuted for me spoilt the moment of triumph.

In Moscow, I learned that Lenin and Kamenev had promised to see that Voline, now in a Cheka prison, would not die. Here we were with our discussions in the Imperial halls of the Kremlin, while this model revolutionary was in a cell awaiting an uncertain end.

After I left the Kremlin I would visit another dissident, this time a Marxist, whose honesty and brilliance were of the first order: Yuri Ossipovich Martov, co-founder, with Plekhanov and Lenin, of Russian Social-Democracy, and the leader of Menshevism. He was campaigning for working-class democracy, denouncing the excesses of the Cheka and the Lenin-Trotsky "mania for authority." He kept saying, "Just as though Socialism could be instituted by decree, and by shooting people in cellars!" Lenin, who was fond of him, protected him against the Cheka, though he quailed before Martov's sharp criticism. When I saw Martov he was living on the brink of utter destitution in a little room. He struck me at the very first glance as being aware of his absolute incompatibility with the Bolsheviks, although like them he was a Marxist, highly cultured, uncompromising, and exceedingly brave. Puny, ailing, and limping a little, he had a slightly asymmetrical face, a high forehead, a mild and subtle gaze behind his spectacles, a fine mouth, a straggly beard, and an expression of gentle intelligence. Here was a man of scruple and scholarship, lacking the tough and robust revolutionary will that sweeps obstacles aside. His criticisms were apposite, but his general solutions verged on the utopian. "Unless it returns to democracy, the Revolution is lost": but how return to democracy and what sort of democracy? All the same I felt it to be quite unforgivable that a man of this caliber should be put into a position where it was impossible for him to give the Revolution the whole

wealth available in his thinking. "You'll see, you'll see," he would tell me, "free cooperation with the Bolsheviks is never possible."

Just after I had returned to Petrograd, along with Raymond Lefebvre, Lepetit, Vergeat (a French syndicalist), and Sasha Tubin, a frightful drama took place there, which confirmed Martov's worst fears. I will summarize what happened, though the affair was shrouded in obscurity. The recently founded Finnish Communist Party emerged resentful and divided from a bloody defeat in 1918. Of its leaders, I knew Sirola and Kuusinen, who did not seem particularly competent and had indeed acknowledged the commission of many errors. I had just published a little book by Kuusinen on the whole business; he was a timid little man, circumspect and industrious. An opposition had been formed within the Party, in revulsion from the old Parliamentary leadership that had been responsible for the defeat and which nowadays adhered to the Communist International. A Party Congress at Petrograd resulted in an oppositional majority against the Central Committee, which was supported by Zinoviev. The Comintern President had the Congress proceedings stopped. One evening a little later, some young Finnish students at a military school went along to a Central Committee meeting and summarily shot Ivan Rakhia and seven members of their own party. The press printed shameless lies blaming the assassination on the Whites. The accused openly justified their action, charging the Central Committee with treason, and demanded to be sent to the front. A committee of three including Rosmer and the Bulgarian Shablin was set up by the International to examine the affair; I doubt if it ever met. The case was tried later in secret session by the Moscow revolutionary tribunal, Krylenko being the prosecutor. Its upshot was in some ways reasonable, in others monstrous. The guilty ones were formally condemned, but authorized to go off to the front (I do not know what actually happened to them). However, the leader of the Opposition, Voyto Eloranta, who was considered as "politically responsible," was first condemned to a period of imprisonment, and then, in 1921, shot. So eight graves were dug in the Field of Mars and, from the Winter Palace where the eight red coffins were lying in state covered with branches of pine, we marched them to their graves of heroes of the revolution. Raymond Lefebvre was due to

speak. And say what? He couldn't stop cursing—"For God's sake!"—again and again. On the platform, he denounced imperialism and the counterrevolution, of course. Soldiers and workers listened in silence, frowning.

Traveling with Raymond Lefebvre, Lepetit, and Vergeat was an old friend of mine, Sasha Tubin. During my incarceration in France he had given me patient assistance in keeping up my clandestine correspondence with the outside world. Now while we were traveling around Petrograd, I saw him gloomy and obsessed by somber forebodings. The four set off from Murmansk on a difficult route over the Arctic Sea, which was designed to pass through the naval blockade. Our International Relations Section had worked out this perilous itinerary: embark in a fishing boat, sail well past the tip of the Finnish coast, and land at Vardoe in Norway, on ground that was free and safe. The four started on this route. In a hurry to attend a CGT congress, they set out on a day of stormy weather, and disappeared at sea. Possibly they were engulfed in the storm, or perhaps a Finnish motorboat intercepted them and mowed them down; I knew that in Petrograd spies had trailed our every step. Every day for a fortnight Zinoviev asked me, with mounting anxiety, "Have you any news of the French comrades?" Around this disaster unworthy legends were to grow: they are all lies.[4] (This would be in August or September 1920.)

While these four were drowning, a small-time adventurer was passing through the blockade and taking back to Paris diamonds he had purchased for a trifle in the black market of Odessa. The episode is worth recounting because, in this time of crisis, it demonstrates the scruples even of the Cheka. I was eating with some delegates to the International with an extremely skinny man, badly dressed, who carried on his scrawny neck the head of an unwell

4. There were rumors to the effect that the death of the four was the deliberate result of Comintern policy. Marcel Body, who lived through this experience at Serge's side, later came to doubt the official version. See Body, *Un piano en bouleau de Carilie* (Paris, 1981).

bird of prey, Skrypnik, an Old Bolshevik and member of the Ukraine government—he who was due to commit suicide in 1934, falsely (of course) accused of nationalism (in reality because he was defending some Ukrainian intellectuals). We noticed someone approaching who wore pince-nez and whose generous reddish mustache decorated a ruddy face that I recognized immediately in amazement: Mauricius,* ex–individualist propagandist in Paris, ex–pacifist propagandist during the war, and now ex-what? At the High Court, during the trial of Caillaux and Malvy, one of the senior Paris police officers had suddenly referred to this agitator as "one of our best agents."

"What are you doing here?" I asked him.

"I'm a delegate for my group, I'm going to see Lenin . . ."

"And what about what was said in the High Court? What do you say to that?"

"A dirty trick by the police to discredit me!"

He was arrested, of course, and I had to defend him from the Cheka who wanted to give him an extended acquaintance with agricultural activities in Siberia, so as to stop him taking back potentially useful information on the liaison service of the International. He was allowed to leave at his own risk and he managed very well.

I end this chapter in the aftermath of the Second Congress of the International, in September and October of 1920. I have the feeling that this point marked a kind of boundary for us. The failure of the attack on Warsaw meant the defeat of the Russian Revolution in Central Europe, although no one saw it as such. At home, new dangers were waxing and we were on the road to catastrophes of which we had only a faint foreboding. (By "we," I mean the shrewdest comrades; the majority of the Party was already blindly dependent on the schematism of official thinking.) From October onwards significant events, fated to pass unnoticed in the country at large, were to gather with the gentleness of a massing avalanche. I began to feel, acutely I am bound to say, this sense of a danger from inside, a danger within ourselves, in the very temper and character of victorious Bolshevism.

I was continually racked by the contrast between the stated theory and the reality, by the growth of intolerance and servility among many officials and their drive towards privilege. I remember a conversation I had with the People's Commissar for Food, Tsyurupa, a man with a splendid white beard and candid eyes. I had brought some French and Spanish comrades to him so that he could explain for our benefit the Soviet system of rationing and supply. He showed us beautifully drawn diagrams from which the ghastly famine and the immense black market had vanished without trace.

"What about the black market?" I asked him.

"It is of no importance at all," the old man replied. No doubt he was sincere, but he was a prisoner of his scheme, a captive of his system, within offices whose occupants obviously all primed him with lies. I was astounded. So this was how Zinoviev could believe in the imminence of proletarian revolution in Western Europe. Was this perhaps how Lenin could believe in the prospects of insurrection among the Eastern peoples? The wonderful lucidity of these great Marxists was beginning to be fuddled with a theoretical intoxication bordering on delusion, and they began to be enclosed within all the tricks and tomfooleries of servility. At meetings on the Petrograd front, I saw Zinoviev blush and bow his head in embarrassment at the imbecile flattery thrown in his face by young military careerists in their fresh shiny leather outfits. One of them kept shouting, "We will win because we are under the command of our glorious leader, Comrade Zinoviev!" A comrade who was a former convict had a sumptuously colored cover designed by one of the greatest Russian artists, which was intended to adorn one of Zinoviev's pamphlets. The artist and the ex-convict had combined to produce a masterpiece of obsequiousness, in which Zinoviev's Roman profile stood out like a proconsul in a cameo bordered by emblems. They brought it to the President of the International, who thanked them cordially and, as soon as they were gone, called me to his side.

"It is the height of bad taste," Zinoviev told me in embarrassment, "but I didn't want to hurt their feelings. Have a very small number printed, and get a very simple cover designed instead."

On another day he showed me a letter from Lenin that touched on

the new bureaucracy, calling them "all that Soviet riffraff." This atmosphere was often exacerbated, because the perpetuation of the Terror added an element of intolerable inhumanity. If the Bolshevik militants had not been so admirably straight, objective, disinterested, so determined to overcome any obstacle to accomplish their task, there would have been no hope. But on the contrary, their moral greatness and their intellectual standing inspired boundless confidence. I therefore realized that the notion of double duty was fundamental and I was never to forget it. Socialism isn't only about defending against one's enemies, against the old world it is opposing; it also has to fight within itself against its own reactionary ferments. A revolution seems monolithic only from a distance; close up it can be compared to a torrent that violently sweeps along both the best and the worst at the same time, and necessarily carries along some real counterrevolutionary currents. It is constrained to pick up the worn weapons of the old regime, and these arms are double-edged. In order to be properly served, it has to be put on guard against its own abuses, its own excesses, its own crimes, its own moments of reaction. It has a vital need of criticism, therefore, of an opposition and of the civic courage of those who are carrying it out. And in this connection, by 1920 we were already well short of the mark.

A notable saying of Lenin's kept rising in my mind: "It is a terrible misfortune that the honor of beginning the first Socialist revolution should have befallen the most backward people in Europe." (I quote from memory; Lenin said it on several occasions.) Nevertheless, within the current situation of Europe, bloodstained, devastated, and in profound stupor, Bolshevism was, in my eyes, tremendously and visibly right. It marked a new point of departure in history.

World capitalism, after its first suicidal war, was now clearly incapable either of organizing a positive peace, or (what was equally evident) of deploying its fantastic technological progress to increase the prosperity, liberty, safety, and dignity of mankind. The Revolution was therefore right, as against capitalism, and we saw that the specter of future war would raise a question mark over the existence of civilization itself, unless the social system of Europe was speedily transformed. The fearful Jacobinism of the Russian Revolution seemed to

me to be quite unavoidable, as was the institution of a new revolutionary State, now in the process of disowning all its early promises. In this I saw an immense danger: the State seemed to me to be properly a weapon of war, not a means of organizing production. Over all our achievements there hung a death sentence; since for all of us, for our ideals, for the new justice that was proclaimed, for our new collective economy, still in its infancy, defeat would have brought a peremptory death and after that, who knows what? I thought of the Revolution as a tremendous sacrifice that was required for the future's sake, and nothing seemed to me more essential than to sustain, or rescue, the spirit of liberty within it.

In penning the above lines, I am no more than recapitulating my own writings of that period.

4.
DANGER FROM WITHIN
1920–1921

THE SOCIAL system in these years was later called "War Communism." At the time it was called simply "Communism," and anyone who, like myself, went so far as to consider it purely temporary was looked upon with disdain. Trotsky had just written that this system would last over several decades if the transition to a genuine, unfettered Socialism were to be assured. Bukharin was writing his work on *Economics of the Transition Period*, whose schematic Marxism aroused Lenin's ire. He considered the present mode of organization to be final. And yet, all the time it was becoming simply impossible to live within it: impossible, not of course for the administrators, but for the mass of the population. The wonderful supply system created by Tsyurupa in Moscow and Badaev in Petrograd was working in a vacuum. The corpulent Badaev himself would exclaim at sessions of the Soviet, "The utensil is good but the soup is bad!" Standing before the elegant charts illustrated with green circles and red and blue triangles, Angel Pestaña pulled a wry face and muttered, "I really think that someone is trying to pull the wool over my eyes..." In fact, in order to eat it was necessary to resort, daily and without interruption, to the black market; the Communists did it like everyone else. Banknotes were no longer worth anything, and ingenious theoreticians spoke of the coming abolition of money. There was no paper or colored ink to print stamps, so a decree was issued abolishing postal charges: "a new step in the realization of Socialism." Tram fares were abolished, with disastrous effects, since the overloaded stock deteriorated day by day.

The rations issued by the State cooperatives were minute: black bread (or sometimes a few cupfuls of oats instead), a few herrings each

month, a very small quantity of sugar for people in the "first category" (workers and soldiers), and none at all for the third category (non-workers). The words of St. Paul that were posted up everywhere—HE THAT DOTH NOT WORK, NEITHER SHALL HE EAT!—became ironical, because if you wanted any food you really had to resort to the black market instead of working. In the dead factories, the workers spent their time making penknives out of bits of machinery, or shoe soles out of the conveyor belts, to barter them on the underground market. Total of industrial production had fallen to less than thirty percent of the 1913 figure. If you wished to procure a little flour, butter, or meat from the peasants who brought these things illicitly into town, you had to have cloth or articles of some kind to exchange. Fortunately the town residences of the late bourgeoisie contained quite a lot in the way of carpets, tapestries, linen, and plate. From the leather upholstery of sofas one could make passable shoes; from the draperies, clothing. As the speculation was disorganizing the already creaking railway system, the authorities forbade the transport of foodstuffs by individuals and posted special detachments which mercilessly confiscated the housewife's sack of flour in the stations, and surrounded the markets with militia who fired into the air and carried out confiscations amid tears and protests. Special detachments and militia were hated. The word "commissariocracy" circulated. The Old Believers* proclaimed the end of the world and the reign of the Antichrist.

Winter was a torture (there is no other word for it) for the townspeople: no heating, no lighting, and the ravages of famine. Children and feeble old folk died in their thousands. Typhus was carried everywhere by lice, and took its frightful toll. All this I saw and lived through, for a great while indeed. Inside Petrograd's grand apartments, now abandoned, people were crowded in one room, living on top of one another around a little stove of brick or cast iron which would be standing on the floor, its flue belching smoke through an opening in the window. Fuel for it would come from the floorboards of rooms nearby, from the last stick of furniture available, or else from books. Entire libraries disappeared in this way. I myself burned the collected *Laws of the Empire* as fuel for a neighboring family, a task

that gave me considerable satisfaction. People dined on a pittance of oatmeal or half-rotten horsemeat, a lump of sugar would be divided in tiny fragments among a family, and a single mouthful taken out of turn would start angry scenes. The local Commune did everything it could to keep the children fed, but what it managed was pitiful.

The Russakov family in Marseille c. 1912. Liuba is the eldest, far right

The cooperative provisioning system had to be maintained, since it catered primarily for the starved and battered proletariat, the army, the fleet, and the Party activists. And so requisitioning detachments were sent out into the outlying countryside, only to be driven away, as likely as not, or sometimes even massacred by muzhiks wielding pitchforks. Savage peasants would slit open a commissar's belly, pack it with grain, and leave him by the roadside as a lesson for all. This was how one of my own comrades died, a printing worker. It took place not far from Dno, and I went there afterwards to explain to the desperate villagers that it was all the fault of the imperialist blockade. This was true, but all the same the peasants continued, not unreasonably, to demand both the abolition of requisitioning and the legalization of the market.

"War Communism" could be defined as follows: firstly, requisitioning in the countryside; secondly, strict rationing for the town

population, who were classified into categories; thirdly, complete "socialization" of production and labor; fourthly, an extremely complicated and chit-ridden system of distribution for the remaining stocks of manufactured goods; fifthly, a monopoly of power tending towards the single Party and the suppression of all dissent; sixthly, a state of siege, and the Cheka. This system had been approved by the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party in March and April of 1920. No one dared to admit that it would not work, and the Party did not know that in February of that year Trotsky had asked the Central Committee to abolish requisitioning. Rozhkov, the Marxist historian, wrote to Lenin saying that we were heading for catastrophe: there must be an immediate change in economic relations with the countryside. The Central Committee ordered him off to Pskov, where he was obliged to live, and Lenin replied to him that he had no intention of entering on a policy of surrender before the rural counterrevolution.

The winter of 1920–21 was hideous. Searching for houses fit for our staff to occupy, I visited several buildings in the heart of Petrograd. In a mansion that had once belonged to the society beauty Morskaya, not far from our main military headquarters and the triumphal gateway that opens into the court of the Winter Palace, I found whole rooms plastered with frozen excrement. The WCs would not flush and the soldiers billeted there had installed field latrines on the floorboards. Many houses were in a similar condition; when spring came and the excrement began to run all over the floors, anything might happen to the city. Compulsory clearance squads were organized hastily. Once, while looking for a sick man, I opened the door of an infirmary for typhoid cases in Vassili-Ostrov. It was a small, low building with shutters that faced a sunny, peaceful street, white under the snow. The inside was strangely quiet and cold. Finally, I managed to make out some human forms lying like logs on the floor... The infirmary, unable to bury its dead for lack of horses, had abandoned its dead and moved elsewhere.

I remember what happened one day when I was tramping through the snow with one of the regional military commanders, Mikhail Lashevich, an old revolutionary for the last thirty-five years, one of the architects of the seizure of power and a fearless warrior. I talked to

him of the changes that had to be made. Lashevich was a stocky, thickset man whose face was fleshy and creased with wrinkles. The only solution he could envisage for any problem was a resort to force. Speculation? We'll put a stop to that! "I shall have the covered markets pulled down and the crowds dispersed! There you are!" He did it, too, which only made matters worse.

Political life was pursuing the same line of development; indeed, it could hardly do otherwise. The tendency to override economic difficulties by compulsion and violence led to the growth of general discontent; any free (i.e., critical) expression of opinion became dangerous and consequently had to be treated as enemy activity. I was exceptionally well placed to follow the progress of this evil. I belonged to the governing circles in Petrograd, and was on terms of confidence with various oppositional forces, anarchists, Mensheviks, Left Social-Revolutionaries, and even Communists (the "Workers' Opposition" within the Party), who were already castigating the growing bureaucracy of the regime and the condition of the ordinary worker—wretched not only materially but (what was much worse) legally, since the administration denied him any possibility of speaking out.

Except for the Workers' Opposition these dissenters, who were always falling out among themselves, had become politically bankrupt, in different ways. The Mensheviks, Dan* and Tsereteli, were outright opponents of the seizure of power by the Soviets; in other words, they stood for the continuation of a bourgeois democracy that was quite unworkable and, in the case of some of their leaders, for the vigorous suppression of Bolshevism. The Left Social-Revolutionaries, led by Maria Spiridonova and Kamkov, had first boycotted the Bolshevik authorities, then collaborated with them, and then, in July 1918, raised an insurrection against them, proclaiming their intention to govern alone. The anarchists were chaotically subdivided into pro-Soviet, anti-Soviet, and intermediate tendencies. In 1919 the anti-Soviet anarchists had thrown a bomb into a plenary session of the Communist Party's Moscow Committee, with a total of fifteen victims.

However, these impassioned dissidents of the Revolution, crushed and persecuted as they might be, were still right on many points, above all in their demand, on their own behalf and that of the Russian

people, for freedom of expression and the restoration of liberty in the Soviets. The Soviets indeed, which had been so lively in 1918, were now no more than auxiliary organs of the Party; they possessed no initiative, exercised no control, and in practice represented nothing but the local Party Committees. But as long as the economic system remained intolerable for nine-tenths or so of the population, there could be no question of recognizing freedom of speech for any Tom, Dick, or Harry, whether in the Soviets or elsewhere. The state of siege had now entered the Party itself, which was increasingly run from the top, by the Secretaries. We were at a loss to find a remedy for this bureaucratization: we knew that the Party had been invaded by careerist, adventurist, and mercenary elements who came over in swarms to the side that held power. Within the Party the sole remedy to this evil had to be, and in fact was, the discreet dictatorship of the old, honest, and incorruptible members, in other words the Old Guard.

It was with particular intimacy that I followed the unfolding drama of anarchism, which was to achieve historic significance with the Kronstadt uprising. During the Second Congress of the Communist International, I had observed the negotiations between Lenin and Benjamin Markovich Aleynnikov, an intelligent anarchist whose career had included exile, mathematics, and work as a "Soviet businessman" in Holland. The discussion concerned cooperation with the anarchists. Lenin indicated his agreement with the idea. He had recently given a friendly reception to Nestor Makhno; Trotsky was, much later (in 1938, I think), to recount that Lenin and he had thought of recognizing an autonomous region for the anarchist peasants of the Ukraine, whose military leader Makhno was. That arrangement would have been both just and diplomatic, and perhaps an outlook as generous as this would have spared the Revolution from the tragedy towards which we were drifting. Two pro-Soviet anarchists, energetic and capable men, were working with Chicherin in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs: Herman Sandomirsky, a young scholar who had once been condemned to death in Warsaw and had known the inside of a prison, and Alexander Shapiro, a man of critical and moderate temper.

Kamenev, the President of the Moscow Soviet, offered the anar-

chists the legalization of their movement, complete with its own press, clubs, and bookshops, on condition that they should draw up a register of themselves and conduct a purge of their favorite haunts, which were crawling with malcontents, uncontrollables, semi-lunatics, and a few ill-disguised genuine counterrevolutionaries. The majority of the anarchists gave a horrified refusal to this suggestion of organization and enrollment: "What, are we to form a kind of Party—even us?" Rather than that they would disappear, and have their press and premises taken off them.

Of the anarchist leaders from that tempestuous year of 1918, one was now constructing a new universal language, entirely in monosyllables, called "Ao." Another, Yarchuk, a notable figure among the Kronstadt sailors, was in the Butyrki prison, suffering the pains of scurvy. A third, Nikolai Rogdayev, was in charge of Soviet propaganda in Turkestan. A fourth, Novomirsky, a former terrorist and convict, had joined the Party and was now working with me in Zinoviev's service and displaying the bizarre passion of the newly initiated. A fifth, Grossman-Roschin, who in the old days of 1906 had been the theoretician of "motiveless terror" (which was intended to strike the old regime anywhere, at any time), became a syndicalist and a friend of Lenin and Lunacharsky; he was developing a libertarian theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Finally, there was my old friend Appolon Karelin, a splendid old man I had known in Paris, studying cooperative problems in a little room on the Rue d'Ulm. He was now a member of the All-Russian Executive of Soviets, still living with his white-haired wife in a little room at the National Hotel (one of the Houses of the Soviets). There, broken by old age, his sight failing, his beard white and expansive, he would type, with one finger on an antique machine, his huge book, *Against the Death Penalty*, and expatiate upon the virtues of a federation of free communes.

The group that was almost an ally of Communism, that of Askarov, was devising a "universalist anarchism." Another, the Kropotkinist formation under Atabekian, saw free cooperatives as the only remedy. Boris Voline, still in jail, refused to take up the post as director of education in the Ukraine that was offered him by the Bolshevik leaders. He replied, "I will never treat with the autocracy of the commissars."

It was, altogether, a lamentable chaos of sectarian good intentions. Anarchism was basically a doctrine of far more emotive power than intellectual. When these men met together it was only to proclaim that "*We fight for the obliteration of all State frontiers and boundaries. We proclaim that the whole earth belongs to all peoples!*" (conference of the Moscow Anarchist Union, December 1919). Would it have endangered the Soviet regime if they had been granted freedom of thought and expression? It would be lunatic to think so. It was merely that the majority of Bolsheviks, true to the Marxist tradition, regarded them as "petty-bourgeois utopians" whose existence was incompatible with the extension of "scientific socialism." Inside the brains of the Chekists and of certain bureaucrats who had fallen prey to the psychoses of authority, these "petty-bourgeois" types were fast growing into a rabble of "objective counterrevolutionaries" who had to be put down once and for all.

As Gorky often said, the character of the Russian people, molded both by resistance to despotism and submission to it, engenders an "antiauthoritarian complex," that is to say a potent element of spontaneous anarchism which has generated periodic explosions throughout history. Among the peasants of the Ukraine, their spirit of rebellion, their capacity for self-organization, their love for local autonomy, the necessity of relying on nobody but themselves as defense against the Whites, the Germans, the Yellow-and-Blue nationalists, and often against harsh and ignorant commissars from Moscow, heralds of endless requisitioning—all these factors gave rise to an extraordinarily vital and powerful movement: the "Insurgent Peasant Armies" assembled in the regions of Gulyai-Polye by an anarchist schoolmaster and ex-convict, Nestor Makhno. Under the inspiration of Boris Voline and Aaron Baron,* the anarchist Nabat (or "Alarm") Federation provided this movement both with an ideology, that of the Third (libertarian) Revolution, and with a banner, the black flag. These peasants displayed a truly epic capacity for organization and battle. Nestor Makhno, boozing, swashbuckling, disorderly, and idealistic, proved himself to be a born strategist of unsurpassed ability. The number of soldiers under his command ran at times into several tens of thousands. His arms he took from the enemy. Sometimes his insurgents

marched into battle with one rifle for every two or three men: a rifle which, if any soldier fell, would pass at once from his still-dying hands into those of his alive and waiting neighbor.

Makhno invented a form of infantry mounted in carts, which gave him enormous mobility. He also invented the procedure of burying his weapons and disbanding his forces for a while. His men would pass, unarmed, through the front lines, unearth a new supply of machine guns from another spot, and spring up again in an unexpected quarter. In September 1919, at Uman, he inflicted a defeat on General Denikin from which the latter was never to recover. Makhno was known as "Batko" (little father, or master). When the railwaymen of Yekaterinoslav (later Dniepropetrovsk) asked him for money to pay their wages, he replied, "Get organized and run the railways yourselves. I don't need them." His popular reputation through the whole of Russia was very considerable, and remained so despite a number of atrocities committed by his bands; despite, also, the strenuous calumnies put out by the Communist Party, which went so far as to accuse him of signing pacts with the Whites at the very moment when he was engaged in a life-and-death struggle against them.

In October 1920, when Baron Wrangel still held the Crimea, a Treaty of Alliance was signed between the Black and the Red armies. Béla Kun, Frunze,* and Gusev were the signatories for the Reds. This treaty was to be a preliminary to an all-Russian amnesty for the anarchists, the legalization of their movement and the convening of an anarchist Congress at Kharkhov. The Black cavalry broke through the White lines and penetrated into the Crimea; this victory, coinciding with that of Frunze and Blücher* at Perekop, was the decisive blow against the White Crimean regime, which had recently received recognition from Britain and France.

In Petrograd and Moscow the anarchists were making ready for their Congress. But no sooner had this joint victory been won than they were suddenly (in November 1920) arrested en masse by the Cheka. The Black victors of the Crimea, Karetnik, Gavrilenko, and others were betrayed, arrested, and shot. Makhno, surrounded at Gulyai-Polye, resisted like a madman. He cut a way out for his troops and kept fighting right up to August 1921. (Later he was to be interned

in Romania, Poland, and Danzig, and end his days as a factory worker in Paris.)

This fantastic attitude of the Bolshevik authorities, who tore up the pledges they themselves had given to this endlessly daring revolutionary peasant minority, had a terribly demoralizing effect; in it I see one of the basic causes of the Kronstadt rising. The Civil War was winding to its close, and the peasantry, incensed by the constant requisitioning, was drawing the conclusion that it was impossible to come to any understanding with "the commissars."

Equally serious was the fact that many workers, including quite a few Communist workers, were pretty near the same opinion. The "Workers' Opposition," led by Shliapnikov,* Alexandra Kollontai,* and Medvedev, believed that the revolution was doomed if the Party failed to introduce radical changes in the organization of work, restore genuine freedom and authority to the trade unions, and make an immediate turn towards establishing a true Soviet democracy. I had long discussions on this question with Shliapnikov. A former metalworker, one of the very few Bolsheviks who had taken part in the Petrograd revolution of February and March of 1917, he kept about him, even when in power, the mentality, the prejudices, and even the old clothes he had possessed as a worker. He distrusted the officials ("that multitude of scavengers") and was skeptical about the Comintern, seeing too many parasites in it who were only hungry for money. Corpulent and unwieldy, with a large, round, mustachioed face, he was a very bitter man when I met him. The discussion on the trade unions, in which he was a passionate participant, yielded little result. Trotsky advocated the fusion of the trade unions with the State. Lenin stood for the principles of trade union autonomy and the right to strike, but with the complete subordination of the unions to the Party. The Party steamroller was at work. I took part in the discussion in one of the districts of Petrograd, and was horrified to see the voting rigged for Lenin's and Zinoviev's "majority." That way would resolve nothing: every day in Smolny the only talk was of factory incidents, strikes, and booing at Party agitators. This was in November and December of 1920.

In February 1921, old Kropotkin died at Dimitrovo, near Moscow.

I had made no effort to see him, fearing that any conversation between us would be painful; he still believed that the Bolsheviks had received German money, etc. My friends and I had known that he was living in cold and darkness, working on his *Ethics* and playing the piano a little for recreation, and so we had sent him a luxurious parcel of wax candles. I knew the contents of his letters to Lenin about Bolshevik intolerance and the nationalization of the book trade. If they are ever published, the acuteness with which Kropotkin denounced the perils of directed thought will be plainly evident. I went up to Moscow for his funeral. These were heartbreaking days: the great frost in the midst of the great hunger. I was the only member of the Party to be accepted as a comrade in anarchist circles. Around the corpse of the great old man, exposed to view in the Hall of Columns of the House of Trade Unions, untoward incidents multiplied despite all Kamenev's tact and good intentions. The shadow of the Cheka fell everywhere, but a packed and passionate multitude thronged around the bier, making this funeral ceremony into a demonstration of unmistakable significance.

Kamenev had promised to release all the imprisoned anarchists for the day. So it was that Aaron Baron and Yarchuk stood on guard beside the dead man's remains. Frozen face, high, graceful forehead, narrow nose, beard like snow: Kropotkin lay there like a sleeping wizard, while around him angry voices were whispering that the Cheka was violating Kamenev's promise, that a hunger strike had been voted in the jails, that so-and-so and so-and-so had just been arrested, that the shootings in the Ukraine were still going on . . .

The lengthy negotiations to get permission for a black flag and a burial oration sent a wave of anger through the crowd. The long procession, surrounded by students making a chain of linked hands, set off to the cemetery of Novodevichy, accompanied by singing choirs who walked behind black flags bearing inscriptions in denunciation of all tyranny. At the cemetery, in the transparent sunlight of winter, a grave had been opened under a silvery birch. Mostovenko, the delegate from the Bolshevik Central Committee, and Alfred Rosmer, from the Executive of the International, spoke in conciliatory terms. Then Aaron Baron, arrested in the Ukraine, due to return that evening

to a prison from which he would never again emerge, lifted his emaciated, bearded, gold-spectacled profile to cry relentless protests against the new despotism: the butchers at work in their cellars, the dishonor shed upon Socialism, the official violence that was trampling the Revolution underfoot. Fearless and impetuous, he seemed to be sowing the seeds of new tempests. The Government founded a Kropotkin Museum, endowed a number of schools with Kropotkin's name, and promised to publish his works . . . (10 February 1921).

Eighteen days elapsed. On the night of 28–29 February I was awakened by the ringing of a telephone in a room at the Astoria next to my own. An agitated voice told me: "Kronstadt is in the hands of the Whites. We are all under orders."

The man who announced this frightful news to me (frightful, because it meant the fall of Petrograd at any minute) was Ilya Ionov, Zinoviev's brother-in-law. "What Whites? Where did they come from? It's incredible!"

"A General Kozlovsky."

"But our sailors? The Soviet? The Cheka? The workers at the Arsenal?"

"That's all I know."

Zinoviev was in conference with the Revolutionary Council of the Army. I ran to the premises of the Second District Committee, which I found full of gloomy faces. "It's unbelievable, but it's true all the same."

"Well," I said, "everybody must be mobilized immediately!" I was given the evasive reply that this would be done, but that we were awaiting instructions from the Petrograd Committee.

I spent the rest of the night studying the map of the Gulf of Finland, along with some of the comrades. We gathered that a considerable number of small strikes were now spreading in the working-class suburbs: the Whites in front of us, famine and strikes at our backs! When I came away at dawn, I saw an old maid from the hotel staff, quietly making her way out with several parcels.

"Where are you off to like this, so early in the morning, grandmother?"

"There's a smell of trouble about the town. They're going to cut all

your throats, my poor little ones, they're going to be looting everything, all over again. So, I'm taking my things away."

Small posters stuck on the walls in the still-empty streets proclaimed that the counterrevolutionary General Kozlovsky had seized Kronstadt through conspiracy and treason; the proletariat were summoned to arms. But even before I went to the District Committee I met comrades, rushing out with their revolvers, who told me that it was an atrocious lie: the sailors had mutinied, it was a naval revolt led by the Soviet. This was perhaps no less serious than the other story: quite the reverse. The worst of it all was that we were paralyzed by the official falsehoods. It had never happened before that our Party should lie to us like this. "It's necessary for the benefit of the public," said some, who were nonetheless horror-stricken at it all. The strike was now practically general. No one knew whether the trams would run.

That same day I met my friends of the French-speaking Communist group (I remember that Marcel Body* and Georges Hellfer* were present). We resolved not to take up arms or to fight, either against famished strikers or against sailors pushed to the limits of their patience. At Vassili-Ostrov I saw a crowd, composed overwhelmingly of women, standing in the snow-white street, obstructing and slowly pushing back the cadets from the military schools who had been sent to clear the approaches to the factories. It was a quiet, sad-looking crowd; they told the soldiers of their misery, called them brothers, and asked for their help. The cadets took bread from their pockets and shared it out. The organization of the general strike was being attributed to the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries.

Pamphlets distributed in the working-class districts put out the demands of the Kronstadt Soviet. It was a program for the renewal of the Revolution. I will summarize it: reelection of the Soviets by secret ballot, freedom of the spoken and printed word for all revolutionary parties and groupings, freedom for the trade unions, the release of revolutionary political prisoners, abolition of official propaganda, an end to requisitioning in the countryside, freedom for the artisan class, immediate suppression of the road blocks that were stopping the people from getting their food as they pleased. The Soviet, the Kronstadt

garrison, and the crews of the First and Second Naval Squadrons were now in rebellion to ensure the triumph of this program.

The truth seeped through little by little, past the smokescreen put out by the press, which was positively berserk with lies. And this was our own press, the press of our revolution, the first Socialist press, and hence the first incorruptible and unbiased press in the world! Before now it had employed a certain amount of demagogy, which was, however, passionately sincere, and some violent tactics towards its adversaries. That might be fair enough and at any rate was understandable. Now, it lied systematically. The Leningrad *Pravda* stated that Kuzmin, the commissar in charge of the fleet and army, had been brutally handled during his captivity at Kronstadt and had only just escaped summary execution, which had been ordered for him in writing by the counterrevolutionaries. I knew Kuzmin, an expert in his particular line, a forceful and industrious soldier, gray from head to foot, from his uniform to his wrinkled face. He "escaped" from Kronstadt and came back to Smolny. I told him, "I can scarcely believe that they wanted to shoot you. Did you really see the order?"

He hesitated, in some embarrassment: "Oh, you always get these exaggerations. There was some little sheet written in threatening terms." In short, he had had a warm time of it, nothing more. The Kronstadt insurrection had shed not a single drop of blood, and merely arrested a few Communist officials, who were treated absolutely correctly; the great majority of Communists, numbering several hundreds, had rallied to the uprising (a clear proof of the Party's instability at its base). All the same, a legend of narrowly averted executions was put around. Throughout this tragedy, rumor played a fatal part. Since the official press concealed everything that was not a eulogy of the regime's achievements, and the Cheka's doings were shrouded in utter mystery, disastrous rumors were generated every minute. The Kronstadt mutiny began as a movement of solidarity with the Petrograd strikes, and also as the result of rumors about their repression. Basically, these rumors were false, although the Cheka, true to form, had doubtlessly been carrying out pointless arrests, usually of brief duration. Almost every day I saw the Secretary of the Petrograd Committee, Sergei Zorin, who was very concerned by the

unrest and was determined not to use repression in workers' districts. He thought that agitation was far more effective in the circumstances, and to reinforce it he would get hold of cartloads of food. He laughed when telling me that once he came to a district where right-wing Social Revolutionaries had managed to raise the slogan "Long live the Constituent Assembly" (meaning "Down with Bolshevism!"). "I announced," he said, "the arrival of several wagonloads of food and I turned it around in the wink of an eye." In any case, the insubordination in Kronstadt had started as a movement of solidarity with the Petrograd strikes and because of the false rumors of repression.

The real culprits, whose brutal bungling provoked the rebellion, were Kalinin and Kuzmin. Kalinin, the President of the Republic's Executive, was met by the Kronstadt garrison with music and welcoming salutes; once informed of the sailors' demands, he treated them as rogues and traitors merely out for themselves, and threatened them with merciless reprisals. Kuzmin shouted that indiscipline and treason would be smashed by the iron hand of the proletariat. They were chased away to a chorus of booing; the break was now final. It was probably Kalinin who, on his return to Petrograd, invented "the White General Kozlovsky." Thus, right from the first moment, at a time when it was easy to mitigate the conflict, the Bolshevik leaders had no intention of using anything but forcible methods. Later, we discovered that the whole of the delegation sent by Kronstadt to explain the issues to the Petrograd Soviet and people was in the prisons of the Cheka.

The idea of mediation arose during the discussions I had every evening with some American anarchists who had arrived recently: Emma Goldman,* Alexander Berkman,* and Perkus, the young Secretary of the Russian Workers' Union in the United States. I spoke of the matter to some comrades from the Party. They answered, "It will all be quite useless. We are bound by Party discipline, and so are you."

I flared up: "One can leave a Party!"

They replied, cold and serious: "A Bolshevik does not leave his Party. And anyway, where would you go? You have to face it, there is no one but us."

The anarchist mediation group met at the house of my father-in-law, Alexander Russakov.* I was not present at this meeting since it

had been decided that only the anarchists would undertake this initiative (in view of the influence they exerted within the Kronstadt Soviet) and that, as far as the Soviet Government was concerned, the American anarchists would take sole responsibility for the attempt. Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were received warmly by Zinoviev, since they were able to speak with authority, in the name of a still-important section of the international working class. Their mediation was a complete failure. As a consolation, Zinoviev offered them every facility for touring the whole of Russia in a special train: "Observe, and you will understand." Most of the Russian "mediators" were arrested, apart from myself. I owe this forbearance to the kindness of Zinoviev, Zorin, and others, as well as to my qualifications as a militant from the French working-class movement.

After many hesitations, and with unutterable anguish, my Communist friends and I finally declared ourselves on the side of the Party. This is why. Kronstadt had right on its side. Kronstadt was the beginning of a fresh, liberating revolution for popular democracy: "The Third Revolution!" it was called by certain anarchists whose heads were stuffed with infantile illusions. However, the country was absolutely exhausted, and production practically at a standstill; there were no reserves of any kind, not even reserves of stamina in the hearts of the masses. The working-class elite that had been molded in the struggle against the old regime was literally decimated. The Party, swollen by the influx of power-seekers, inspired little confidence. Of the other parties, only minute nuclei existed, whose character was highly questionable. It seemed clear that these groupings could come back to life in a matter of weeks, but only by incorporating embittered, malcontent, and inflammatory elements by the thousands, no longer, as in 1917, enthusiasts for the young revolution. Soviet democracy lacked leadership, institutions, and inspiration; at its back there were only masses of starving and desperate men.

The popular counterrevolution translated the demand for freely elected Soviets into one for "Soviets without Communists." If the Bolshevik dictatorship fell, it was only a short step to chaos, and through chaos to a peasant rising, the massacre of the Communists, the return of the émigrés, and in the end, through the sheer force of

events, another dictatorship, this time anti-proletarian. Dispatches from Stockholm and Tallinn testified that the émigrés had these very perspectives in mind—dispatches which, incidentally, strengthened the Bolshevik leaders' intention of subduing Kronstadt speedily and at whatever cost. We were not reasoning in the abstract. We knew that in European Russia alone there were at least fifty centers of peasant insurrection. To the south of Moscow, in the region of Tambov, Antonov, the Right Social-Revolutionary schoolteacher who proclaimed the abolition of the Soviet system and the reestablishment of the Constituent Assembly, had under his command a superbly organized peasant army, numbering several tens of thousands. He had conducted negotiations with the Whites. (Tukhachevsky would suppress this *Vendée* around the middle of 1921.)

In these circumstances it was the Party's duty to make concessions, recognizing that the economic regime was intolerable, but not to abdicate power. "Despite its mistakes and abuses," I wrote, "the Bolshevik Party is at present the supremely organized, intelligent, and stable force that, despite everything, deserves our confidence. The Revolution has no other mainstay, and is no longer capable of any thoroughgoing regeneration."

The Politburo decided to negotiate with Kronstadt, then to present an ultimatum, and in the last resort to order an attack on the fort and the battleships, which were now immobilized in the ice. In fact, no negotiations took place. An ultimatum was published, signed by Lenin and Trotsky and worded in disgusting terms: "Surrender, or you will be shot down like rabbits." Trotsky did not come to Petrograd, and acted only within the Politburo.

At the end of the autumn or the beginning of winter, simultaneously with the outlawing of the anarchists on the morrow of the victory that had been won with their aid, the Cheka had outlawed the Menshevik Social-Democrats. In a quite frightening official document they charged the Mensheviks with "conspiracy with the enemy, organization of railway-wrecking," and other enormities in equally odious terms. The Bolshevik leaders themselves blushed at it all. They shrugged their shoulders ("The Cheka is mad!") but did nothing to set matters right; the most they would do was to promise the Mensheviks that

there would be no arrests and that everything would sort itself out. Theodore Dan and Abramovich,* the leaders of Menshevism, were arrested in Petrograd. The Cheka, which at the time, if my memory is not at fault, was run by Semionov, a redheaded little worker, rude and cruel, wanted to shoot them as the leaders of the strike, which was now almost of a general character. This was most probably untrue since the strike was three-quarters spontaneous. I had just had a row with Semionov on the subject of two students who had been kept in freezing cells and manhandled. I appealed to Gorky; at that very moment he was intervening with Lenin to save the lives of the Menshevik leaders. Once Lenin was alerted they were absolutely safe. But for several nights we trembled in our shoes for them.

At the beginning of March, the Red Army began its attack, over the ice, against Kronstadt and the fleet. The artillery from the ships and forts opened fire on the attackers. In several places the ice cracked open under the feet of the infantry as it advanced, wave after wave, clad in white sheets. Huge ice floes rolled over, bearing their human cargo down into the black torrent. It was the beginning of a ghastly fratricide.

The Tenth Congress of the Party, which was meanwhile in session at Moscow, was now, on Lenin's proposal, abolishing the system of requisitions, or in other words "War Communism," and proclaiming the "New Economic Policy."* All the economic demands of Kronstadt were being satisfied! At the same time the Congress gave a rough time to the various oppositions. The Workers' Opposition was classified as "an anarcho-syndicalist deviation incompatible with the Party," although it had absolutely nothing in common with anarchism and merely demanded the management of production by the unions (which would have been a great step towards democracy for the working class). The Congress mobilized all present, including many Oppositionists, for the battle against Kronstadt. Dybenko, a former Kronstadt sailor himself and an extreme Left Communist, and Bubnov, the writer, soldier, and leader of the "Democratic Centralism" group, went out to join battle on the ice against rebels who they knew in their hearts were right. Tukhachevsky prepared the final assault. In these dark days, Lenin said, word for word, to one of my friends: "This is Thermidor. But we shan't let ourselves be guillotined. We shall make a Thermidor ourselves."

The Oranienbaum incident, which has not been related by anyone, as far as I know, brought Kronstadt within an inch of a victory that was unsought by its revolutionary sailors, and Petrograd within an inch of ruin. I know this from eyewitnesses. The secretary of the Petrograd Committee, Sergei Zorin, a great blond Viking, noticed from the deployment of the infantry by one of the commanders that his troop movements did not seem to be logically justified. After two days, we were certain there was a plot afoot. A whole regiment was on the point of wheeling round in solidarity with Kronstadt and summoning the army to revolt. At that moment Zorin reinforced it with trusty men, doubled the strength of the outposts and sentries, and arrested the regimental commander. The latter, a former officer in the Imperial army, was brutally frank: "I waited years for this moment. Murderers of Russia, I hate you. I have lost the game, and now life means nothing to me!" He was shot, along with a good many others. It was a regiment that had been recalled from the Polish front.

The business had to be got over before the thaw began. The final assault was unleashed by Tukhachevsky on 17 March, and culminated in a daring victory over the impediment of the ice. Lacking any qualified officers, the Kronstadt sailors did not know how to employ their artillery; there was, it is true, a former officer named Kozlovsky among them, but he did little and exercised no authority. Some of the rebels managed to reach Finland. Others put up a furious resistance, fort by fort and street by street; they stood and were shot crying "Long live the world revolution!" There were some of them who died shouting "Long live the Communist International!" Hundreds of prisoners were taken away to Petrograd and handed to the Cheka; months later they were still being shot in small batches, a senseless and criminal agony. Those defeated sailors belonged body and soul to the Revolution; they had voiced the suffering and the will of the Russian people; the NEP had proved that they were right; and, finally, they were prisoners of war, civil war, and the Government had for a long time promised an amnesty to its opponents on condition that they offered their support. This protracted massacre was either supervised or permitted by Dzerzhinsky.

The leaders of the Kronstadt rising were hitherto unknown men,

thrown up from the ranks. One of them, Petrichenko,* is perhaps still alive; he reached sanctuary quickly enough in Finland. Another, Perepelkin, happened to be in jail with a friend of mine whom I used to visit, in the old House of Arrest on Shpalernaya Street, through which so many revolutionaries, including Lenin and Trotsky, had passed in the old days. From the depths of his cell Perepelkin gave us an account of what had happened. Then he disappeared forever.

Somber 18 March. The morning papers had come out with flamboyant headlines commemorating a working-class anniversary, that of the Paris Commune. Meanwhile the muffled thunder of the guns over Kronstadt kept shaking the windows. A guilty unease settled over the offices in Smolny. People avoided talking except with their closest friends, and among close friends, what was said was full of bitterness. The vast landscape of the Neva had never seemed to me more colorless and desolate. By a remarkable historical coincidence on this same day, 18 March, a Communist rising in Berlin collapsed; its failure marked a new turn in the tactics of the International, which was now to proceed from the offensive to the defensive.

Within the Party, Kronstadt opened a period of dismay and doubt. In Moscow Paniushkin, a Bolshevik with a distinguished record in the Civil War, resigned demonstratively from the Party to found a new political organization: I think it was called the "Soviet Party." He opened a club in a working-class street; he was tolerated for a brief while, then arrested. Some comrades came and asked me to intercede for his wife and child, who had been evicted from their apartment and were now living in a corridor. I could do nothing for them. Another Old Bolshevik, a worker named Miasnikov, who had taken part in the 1905 Upper Volga rising and knew Lenin personally, demanded freedom of the press "for everybody from the anarchists to the monarchists." He broke off relations with Lenin after a sharp exchange of correspondence, and was soon to be deported to Erivan in Armenia. From there he escaped to Turkey. (I was to meet him twenty or so years later, in Paris.) The "Work-

ers' Opposition" appeared to be heading towards a break with the Party.

The truth was that emergent totalitarianism had already gone halfway to crushing us. "Totalitarianism" did not yet exist as a word; as an actuality it began to press hard on us, even without our being aware of it. I belonged to that pitifully small minority that realized what was going on. Most of the Party leadership and activists, in reviewing their ideas about War Communism, came to the conclusion that it was an economic expedient analogous to the centralized regimes set up during the war in Germany, France, and Britain, which they termed "war capitalism." They hoped that, once peace came, the state of siege would fall away spontaneously and some sort of Soviet democracy, of which nobody had any clear conception, would return. The great ideas of 1917, which had enabled the Bolshevik Party to win over the peasant masses, the army, the working class, and the Marxist intelligentsia, were quite clearly dead. Did not Lenin, in 1917, suggest a Soviet form of free press, whereby any group with the support of ten thousand votes could publish its own organ at the public expense? He had written that within the Soviets power could be passed from one party to another without any necessity for bitter conflicts. His theory of the Soviet State promised a state structure totally different from that of the old bourgeois states, "without officials or a police force distinct from the people," in which the workers would exercise power directly through their elected Councils, and keep order themselves through a militia system.

What with the political monopoly, the Cheka and the Red Army, all that now existed of the "Commune-State" of our dreams was a theoretical myth. The war, the internal measures against counterrevolution, and the famine (which had created a bureaucratic rationing apparatus) had killed off Soviet democracy. How could it revive, and when? The Party lived in the certain knowledge that the slightest relaxation of its authority would give the day to reaction.

To these historical features, certain important psychological considerations must be added. Marxism has changed several times, according to the times. It developed out of bourgeois science and

philosophy and out of the revolutionary aspirations of the proletariat at the moment when capitalist society was reaching its peak. It presents itself as the natural heir of that society of which it is the product. Capitalist industrial society tends to encompass the whole of the world, fashioning all aspects of life to its design. Consequently, ever since the beginning of the twentieth century, Marxism has aimed to renew and transform everything: the property system, the organization of work, the map of the world (through the abolition of frontiers), and even the inner life of man (through the extinction of the religious mode of thought). Aspiring to a total transformation, it has consequently been, in the etymological sense of the word, totalitarian. It presents the two faces of the ascendant society, simultaneously democratic and authoritarian. The greatest Marxist party, from 1880 to 1920, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, was bureaucratically organized on the lines of a State, and functioned as a means of achieving power within the State. Bolshevik thought draws its inspiration from the feeling of possession of the truth. In the eyes of Lenin, of Bukharin, of Preobrazhensky,* dialectical materialism is both the law of human thought as well as that of the development of nature and of societies. Bolshevik thinking is grounded in the possession of the truth. The Party is the repository of truth, and any form of thinking that differs from it is a dangerous or reactionary error. Here lies the spiritual source of its intolerance. The absolute conviction of its lofty mission assures it of a moral energy quite astonishing in its intensity—and, at the same time, a clerical mentality which is quick to become Inquisitorial. Lenin's "proletarian Jacobinism," with its detachment and discipline both in thought and action, is eventually grafted upon the preexisting temperament of activists molded by the old regime, that is by the struggle against despotism. I am quite convinced that a sort of natural selection of authoritarian temperaments is the result. Finally, the victory of the revolution deals with the inferiority complex of the perpetually vanquished and bullied masses by arousing in them a spirit of social revenge, which in turn tends to generate new despotic institutions. I was witness to the great intoxication with which yesterday's sailors and workers exercised command and enjoyed the satisfaction of demonstrating that they were now in power!

For all these reasons, even the great popular leaders themselves flounder within inextricable contradictions which dialectics allows them to surmount verbally, sometimes even demagogically. Twenty or maybe a hundred times, Lenin sings the praises of democracy and stresses that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a dictatorship against "the expropriated possessing classes," and at the same time, "the broadest possible workers' democracy." He believes and wants it to be so. He goes to give an account of himself before the factories; he asks for merciless criticism from the workers. Concerned with the lack of personnel, he also writes, in 1918, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not at all incompatible with personal power, thereby justifying, in advance, some variety of Bonapartism. He has Bogdanov,* his old friend and comrade, jailed because this outstanding intellectual confronts him with embarrassing objections. He outlaws the Mensheviks because these "petty-bourgeois" Socialists are guilty of errors that happen to be awkward. He welcomes the anarchist partisan Makhno with real affection, and tries to prove to him that Marxism is right, but he either permits or engineers the outlawing of anarchism. He promises peace to religious believers and orders that the churches are to be respected, but he keeps saying that "religion is the opium of the people." We are proceeding towards a classless society of free men, but the Party has posters stuck up nearly everywhere announcing that "the rule of the workers will never cease." Over whom then will they rule? And what is the meaning of this word *rule*? Totalitarianism is within us.

At the end of spring in 1921, Lenin wrote a long article defining what the NEP would be: an end to requisitions and taxes in kind from the peasants, freedom of trade, freedom for production by craftsmen, concessions on attractive terms to foreign capital, freedom of enterprise (within certain limits, of course) for Soviet citizens themselves. It amounted to a partial restoration of capitalism: Lenin admitted this in so many words. At the same time he refused to grant the country any political freedom at all: "The Mensheviks will stay in jail!" And he proclaimed a purge of the Party, aimed against those revolutionaries who had come in from other parties—i.e., those who were not saturated with the Bolshevik mentality. This meant the establishment within the Party of a dictatorship of the Old Bolsheviks, and the

direction of disciplinary measures, not against the unprincipled careerists and conformist latecomers, but against those sections with a critical outlook.

A little while afterwards, during the Third Congress of the International, I was present at an address which Bukharin gave to the foreign delegates. He justified NEP in terms of "the impossibility of breaking the rural petty bourgeoisie (the peasants, with their attachment to small private property) by means of a single bloodletting—an impossibility which stems from the isolation of the Russian Revolution." If the German Revolution, with Germany's industrial resources behind it, had come to our assistance, we would have persisted in traveling the path of total Communism, even if it had required bloodshed. I do not have the text of this speech before me, but I was responsible for printing it, and am sure that this is an accurate summary. It amazed me all the more since I had chanced to meet Bukharin several times at Zinoviev's, and genuinely admired him.

Lenin, Trotsky, Karl Radek, and Bukharin had, beyond any doubt, become the brains of the Revolution. They spoke the same Marxist language, and had the same background of experience with the Socialism of Europe and America. Consequently they understood one another so well, by the merest hints, that they seemed to think collectively. (And it is a fact that the Party drew its strength from collective thinking.) Compared with them, Lunacharsky, the People's Commissar for Education, seemed a dilettante: he was a playwright, a poet, and a first-rate speaker, with a touch of vanity, who had translated Hölderlin and acted as the protector of Futurist painters. Beside them, Zinoviev was simply a demagogue, a popularizer of ideas worked out by Lenin; Chicherin, the foreign affairs specialist, never emerged from his archives; Kalinin was no more than a wily figurehead, chosen for the post because of his splendid peasant face and his keen nose for the state of popular feeling. There were other outstanding figures, men of proven ability, but these were secondary characters, concerned purely with practical tasks: Krassin, Piatakov, Sokolnikov, Smilga, Rakovsky, Preobrazhensky, Joffe, Ordzhonikidze, Dzerzhinsky.

Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin was thirty-three years old; for fifteen of those years he had been a militant. He had lived through a phase of exile in Onega, spent some time with Lenin in Cracow, and worked for the Party in Vienna, Switzerland, and New York. His devotion to theoretical economics was quite tireless. He had anticipated Lenin in elaborating a theory of the complete overthrow of the capitalist state. His mind was effervescent, always alert and active, but rigorously disciplined. The high forehead, balding at the temples, the thin hair, slightly turned-up nose, chestnut-brown mustache, and small beard—all made him look just like the average Russian, and his careless manner of dress completed the picture. He dressed all anyhow, as if he had never found time to get a suit that fitted him properly. His usual expression was jovial; even when he was silent the look in his eye, sharpened by a humorous twinkle, was so lively that he always seemed to be just about to come out with some witticism or other. The manner in which he spoke of others savored of a good-natured cynicism. He devoured books in several languages and had a playful touch in dealing with the most serious subjects. It was immediately obvious that what he most enjoyed was just thinking. He was habitually surrounded by crowds of smiling young listeners, who drank in all his incisive observations. He was bitingly contemptuous of the trade union and Parliamentary politicians of the West.

Karl Bernardovich Radek (thirty-five years old) could, as we used to say, only speak his own language—the accent he used to express himself in all the others was so incredibly bad. A Galician Jew, he had grown up in the Socialist movements of Galicia, Poland, Germany, and Russia, all at the same time. He was a sparkling writer, with an equal flair for synthesis and for sarcasm. Thin, rather small, nervous, full of anecdotes that often had a savage side to them, realistic to the point of cruelty, he had a beard growing in a fringe around his clean-shaven face, just like an old-time pirate. His features were irregular, and thick tortoiseshell spectacles ringed his myopic eyes. His walk, staccato gestures, prominent lips, and screwed-up face, every part of which was continually expressive, all had something monkey-like and comical about them.

In 1918, when Lenin was thinking in terms of a mixed economy, Radek and Bukharin had been the first to demand the nationalization of large-scale industry. In the same year, during the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, they had accused Lenin, some fifteen years their senior, of opportunism, and advocated a romantic war of all-out resistance against the German Empire, even if it meant suicide for the Soviet Republic. In 1919 Radek had put his daring and common sense into an attempt to lead the German Spartakist* movement, and was lucky to escape being murdered with his friends Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, and Leo Tyszko (Jogiches). I had seen him using his scornful dialectic to harry the German moderates. I can see him now, hitching up his trousers (which were always too big for him), as he stood on the rostrum and, demonstrating, after a grating "*Parteigenossen!*" that the collapse of the old order in Europe was shortly due. Although more of an extemporizer than a theoretician, he was also a scholar, and read every conceivable serious journal. He was now being called a Rightist because he did not mince his words about the German Communist Party, and believed that, for the time being, the period of insurrection and offensive in Central Europe was over.

The Third Congress of the Communist International met at Moscow, in an atmosphere much the same as that of the previous Congress, except that the attendance was larger and the proceedings were more relaxed. With the coming of the NEP, the famine was getting a little less severe, and people anxiously expected a policy of appeasement to follow. The foreign delegates showed no interest in the tragedy of Kronstadt and, except for a few, deliberately closed their minds to any understanding of it. They sat in commission to condemn the Workers' Opposition; this they did with enthusiasm, without giving it a hearing. They considered NEP, amenably enough, to be (as one of the French delegates put it to me) "an inspired turn to the Right" that had saved the Revolution. It was hardly inspiration to yield to a famine after the situation had become quite insupportable. But the majesty of the Russian Revolution disarmed its supporters of all critical sense; they seemed to believe that approval of it entailed the abdication of the right to think.

At the Kremlin, in the great throne room of the Imperial Palace,

Lenin defended the New Economic Policy. As he spoke, he stood beneath tall, extravagantly gilded columns, under a canopy of scarlet velvet bearing the insignia of the Soviets. Dealing with international strategy, he argued for an armistice and a real effort to win over the masses. He was warm, friendly, genial, talking as simply as he could. It was as if he was determined to emphasize with every gesture that the head of the Soviet Government and the Russian Communist Party was still just another comrade—the leading one, of course, through his acknowledged intellectual and moral authority, but no more than this, and one who would never become just another statesman or just another dictator. He was obviously concerned to steer the International by persuasion. While some of the speeches were going on he would come down from the platform and sit on the steps, near the shorthand reporters, with his notepad on his knee. From this position he would interrupt now and then with a little caustic comment that made everybody laugh, and a mischievous smile would light up his face. Or he would buttonhole foreign delegates, people who were almost unknown and practically insignificant, and take them into a corner of the hall to carry on, face-to-face, with the argument he had put forward. The Party must go to the masses! Yes, the masses! And not turn into a sect! And the NEP was not nearly so dangerous as it looked from outside, because we still kept all the fullness of power. The capitalist concession holders would have an important role to play. As for the interior neo-capitalists, we would let them fatten up like young hens and on the day they began to get in the way we would wring their necks, nicely.

Several times I saw him coming away from the Congress, wearing his cap and jacket, quite alone, walking along at a smart pace with the old cathedrals of the Kremlin on either side of him. I saw him batter Béla Kun with a speech of merciless invective, genial as ever, his face bursting with health and good spirits. This was at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the International, held during the Congress in a banqueting room of a hotel on Theater Square below the Kremlin, the Continental, I think. This speech marked a real turning point in Communist policy.

I had some personal knowledge of Béla Kun, whom I found a

wholly unattractive personality. An odd recollection of his arrival in Petrograd comes to mind. My car, driving across the Nevsky Prospect, was suddenly caught up in a strange sea of people from which there emanated not a chant but a kind of murmur. The crowd filled the broad boulevard as far as the eye could see, and was densest before the cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan—it was composed of lowly people, poor women wearing black headscarves, stocky, bearded peasants wearing thick sheepskins, stallholder types, and anti-Semites of days gone by. Above the crowd there floated church banners, a gilded throne with saintly relics, and one could make out the glint of priests' tiaras under a canopy. The prayer rose, and the looks were exalted and mean—mean towards my car, which in itself signified authority. It was one of the great Easter parades and the high clergy of the Patriarch Tikhon being openly against us, this had the makings of a huge counterrevolutionary demonstration, or almost of a pogrom. A rickety cab, coming from the station with two new arrivals, was trying to make its way through the multitude. One of them I recognized by his silver beard and his thin, almost skeletal profile: it was the aged Felix Kohn, the Polish veteran of Kara labor camp. The other was about thirty-five years old and I only noted his fat, round head and his mustache, short but bristly like a cat's. We had been most anxious on his behalf when, after the defeat of the Hungarian Soviets, he had been interned in a Vienna mental asylum, where the Austrian Social-Democrats actually lavished attention on him. A Socialist who in the course of military service had been taken prisoner in Russia, he had begun his revolutionary career in Siberia with the Tomsk Bolsheviks. At the time of the Left Social-Revolutionary uprising of 1918 in Moscow, he had won some distinction by his creation of an international brigade in support of the Party of Lenin and Trotsky. He was jailed at home and came out to become Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Hungary and leader of the Hungarian Communist Party. In these posts he had been responsible for a succession of faults and vacillations; he riddled his own Party with backstage repression and allowed a military conspiracy to gain control over practically the whole country. His personal role during the defeat of the Hungarian Soviets had been pathetic (though this was hardly ever mentioned,

since a popular legend was being allowed to grow around his name). After some reverses the small Red Armies of Hungary regained the initiative. They beat the Romanians and advanced into Czechoslovakia, where the popular movement gave them a sympathetic welcome. Clemenceau, alarmed by this recovery, sent a telegram to Béla Kun, asking him to call off the offensive and hinting that, if this were done, the Entente would negotiate with Red Hungary. Kun was taken in by this trick and halted the offensive; the Romanians rallied their forces and counterattacked. That was the end.

I cannot help thinking that for the rest of his life Béla Kun was dominated by his sense of failure, and never stopped trying to compensate for it. During his mission in Germany he had, on 18 March of the previous year (1921), instigated an uprising in Berlin that was both bloody and, given the undeniable weakness of the Communist Party, doomed to failure from the beginning. The Party emerged from the incident weakened, and divided by the expulsion of Paul Levi who strongly opposed such "insurrectionary adventures." After his return from Germany in the disgrace of another failure, Béla Kun had gone off to win glory in the Crimea.

At a meeting of the Executive of the International Lenin made a lengthy analysis of the Berlin affair, this putsch initiated without mass support, serious political calculation, or any possible outcome but defeat. There were few present, because of the confidential nature of the discussion. Béla Kun kept his big, round, puffy face well lowered; his sickly smile gradually faded away. Lenin spoke in French, briskly and harshly. Ten or more times, he used the phrase "Béla Kun's stupid mistakes": little words that turned his listeners to stone. My wife took down the speech in shorthand, and afterwards we had to edit it somewhat: after all it was out of the question for the symbolic figure of the Hungarian Revolution to be called an imbecile ten times over in a written record!

Actually, Lenin's polemic marked the end of the International's tactics of outright offensive. The failure of this approach had to be clearly stated, and besides Russia was now entering a period of internal appeasement; of these two considerations, of unequal weight, I am not sure which was the more influential. In its official resolution the

Congress still praised the fighting spirit of the German Communist Party, and Béla Kun was not removed from the Executive.

If the Revolution had not been in such a parlous condition at the time, Kun would have had to face questioning about two other crimes. He had been a signatory to the treaty of alliance with Makhno's Black Army; he had also been one of those who tore it up as soon as the joint victory had been achieved. Then too, he had been a member of the Revolutionary Council of the Red Army, which in November 1920 had forced Baron Wrangel out of the Crimea. In this capacity Béla Kun had negotiated the surrender of the remnants of the White army. To this assortment of former monarchist officers he promised an amnesty and the right to resume civilian work; later he ordered them to be massacred. Thousands of war prisoners were thus treacherously exterminated, in the name of "purging the country." Some said thirteen thousand, but there were no statistics and the figure is probably exaggerated. Nevertheless, I encountered several witnesses who were horrified by these massacres by means of which a revolutionary of weak character and shaky intellect had stupidly tried to pose as a "man of steel." Indeed, at that very moment, during the Congress, a militant from the Crimea, a nurse in the Red Army, came to see me on behalf of other activists distressed by these abominations and asked that it be brought to the attention of the leaders of the revolution. I took her to see Angelica Balabanova who heard her stories with terrible sadness.

Trotsky came to the Congress many times. No one ever wore a great destiny with more style. He was forty-one and at the apex of power, popularity, and fame—leader of the Petrograd masses in two revolutions; creator of the Red Army, which (as Lenin had said to Gorky) he had literally "conjured out of nothing"; personally the victor of several decisive battles, at Sviazhsk, Kazan, and Pulkovo; the acknowledged organizer of victory in the Civil War—"Our Carnot!" as Radek called him. He outshone Lenin through his great oratorical talent, through his organizing ability, first with the army, then on the railways, and by his brilliant gifts as a theoretician. As against all this Lenin possessed only the preeminence, which was truly quite immense, of having, even from before the Revolution, been the uncontested head of the tiny Bolshevik Party which constituted the real

backbone of the State, and whose sectarian temper mistrusted the over-rich, over-fluid mind of the Chairman of the Supreme War Council. For a short time there was some talk, in various small groups at the Congress, of elevating Trotsky to the chairmanship of the International. Zinoviev must have been outraged by these pressure groups, and doubtless Lenin preferred to keep his own spokesman at the top of the "World Party." Trotsky himself intended to give his attention to the Soviet economy.

He made his appearance dressed in some kind of white uniform, bare of any insignia, with a broad, flat military cap, also in white, for headgear; his bearing was superbly martial, with his powerful chest, jet-black beard and hair, and flashing eyeglasses. His attitude was less homely than Lenin's, with something authoritarian about it. That, maybe, is how my friends and I saw him, we critical Communists; we had much admiration for him, but no real love. His sternness, his insistence on punctuality in work and battle, the inflexible correctness of his demeanor in a period of general slackness, all gave some rise to certain insidious attacks, demagogic and malicious, that were made against him. I was hardly influenced by these considerations, but the political solutions prescribed by him for current difficulties struck me as proceeding from a character that was basically dictatorial. Had he not proposed the fusion of the trade unions with the State—while Lenin quite rightly wanted the unions to keep some of their independence? We did not grasp that the trade union influence might have actually worked upon the structure of the State, modifying it more effectively in a working-class direction. Had he not set up labor armies? And suggested the militarization of industry as a remedy for its incredible state of chaos? We did not know that earlier, in the Central Committee, he had unsuccessfully proposed an end to the requisitioning system. Labor armies were a good enough expedient in the phase of demobilization. Had he not put his signature to a repulsively threatening manifesto against Kronstadt? The fact was that he had been in the thick of everything, acting with a self-confident energy that tried out directly opposite solutions by turns.

During one session, he came down straight from the platform and stood in the middle of our French group to give a translation of his

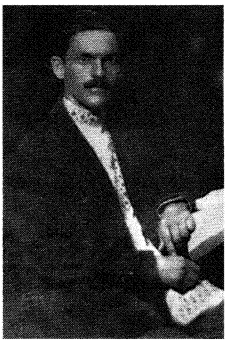
own speech. He spoke passionately, in slightly incorrect but fluent French. He replied sharply when he was heckled—about the Terror, about violence, about Party discipline. Our little group appeared to irritate him. Vaillant-Couturier,* André Morizet, André Julien, Fernand Loriot,* Jacques and Clara Mesnil,* and Boris Souvarine* were all there. Trotsky was easy and cordial, but imperious in argument. On another occasion he flew at the Spanish delegate, Orlandis, who was attacking the persecution of the anarchists. Trotsky seized him violently by his coat lapels and almost screamed, "I should certainly like to have seen you in our place, you petty bourgeois!"

During this summer of 1921 I formed, among the comrades from abroad, a number of lasting and even lifelong friendships. I resorted to those who came to Moscow with more concern for truth than orthodoxy, more anxiety for the future of the Revolution than admiration for the proletarian dictatorship. Our relationships were always initiated by conversations of an absolute frankness in which I set myself the responsibility of disclosing all the evils, dangers, difficulties, and uncertain prospects. In an era of fanatical conformism this was, as I still believe, a meritorious thing to do, demanding some courage. I gravitated towards people of a free spirit, those who were fired by a desire to serve the Revolution without closing their eyes. Already an "official truth" was growing up, which seemed to me the most disastrous thing imaginable. I became acquainted with Henriette Roland-Holst,* a Dutch Marxist and a notable poet. Lank, scrawny, and gray-haired, her neck disfigured by goiter, she had a delicately sculptured face with an expression of gentleness and intellectual austerity. The questions she raised with me were symptomatic of a most scrupulous anxiety. She could see far and straight. In her view, the dictatorship was plagued by the worst difficulties to the point of vitiating the fulfillment of its highest goals since it no longer announced the advent of any new freedoms.

Jacques and Clara Mesnil, two former pupils of Élisée Reclus, close to Romain Rolland (who based his criticisms of the violence of the Bolsheviks on his knowledge of the French Revolution as well as on the influence of Ghandism), inclined towards libertarianism, were of a similar opinion. Clara had the face and the grace of a Botticelli and

Jacques the rugged profile of a Florentine humanist. He had begun writing his *Life of Botticelli*, that he finished twenty years later. He wrote little but all those who were close to him benefited from his intelligence, that radiated richness and refinement. The end of his life was really tragic. Towards the age of fifty, Clara lost her reason; Jacques died alone in 1940, during the summer exodus from France.

We were often joined by an Italian worker from the Unione Sindicale, Francesco Ghezzi,* with a hard but frank face, of whom more later. Two young men from the Spanish delegation gave us pledges for the future which they were destined to fulfill at tremendous cost: Joaquín Maurín* and Andrés Nin.* I have always believed that human qualities find their physical expression in a man's personal appearance. A single glance was enough to tell the caliber of Maurín, the teacher from Lérida, and Nin, the teacher from Barcelona. Maurín had the bearing of a young Cavalier from a pre-Raphaelite painting; Nin, behind his gold-rimmed glasses, wore an expression of concentration that was softened by his evident enjoyment of life. Both of them gave their lives to the cause: Maurín destined to an unending succession of jails, Nin to a horrible death during the Spanish Revolution. At this time the overwhelming impression they conveyed was one of idealism and the thirst for understanding.



Francesco Ghezzi in 1921

The French, more sophisticated and more skeptical characters, were generally of a different stuff. André Morizet, mayor of Boulogne, paraded his admirably sound and practical face and his drinking songs for the benefit of us all. (Even now, at Suresnes, in occupied France, he is still fighting to keep his office as Labor mayor; he has returned, after a long interval, to traditional Socialism.) Charles-André Julien was piling up countless annotations for a work so compendious that he was never to write it. (In 1936 and 1937 he was to be one of the Socialist stalwarts of the Popular Front.)

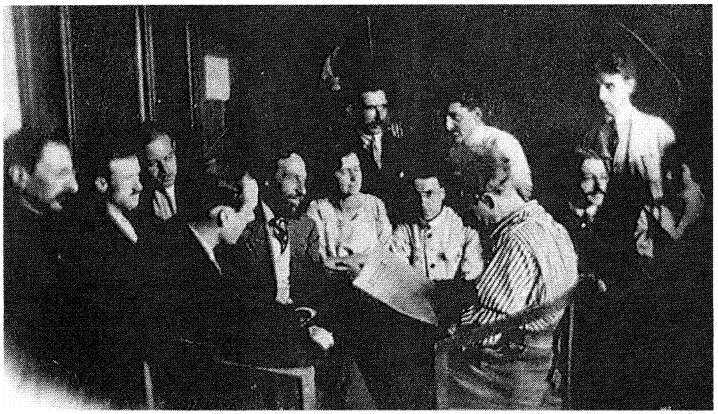
Paul Vaillant-Couturier, a tank officer during the war, a poet, popular orator, and ex–servicemen's leader, was a tall, chubby young man

of extraordinary talents, but fated to become a great disappointment to me. He understood everything that was going on, but in the future he was to acquiesce in his own corruption, to become increasingly entangled with all the villainies of Bolshevism's degeneration, and to die, in working-class Paris, enviably popular. The need for popularity and the fear of going against the current can, during bad periods, play significant roles in fostering corruption.

Boris Souvarine, a Russian Jew by origin but a naturalized Frenchman, had no Socialist background; he came to us, at the age of twenty-five, from the world of left-wing journalism rather than from the working-class movement, with an amazing zest for knowledge and action. Slight and short, his eyes masked by lenses of unusual thickness, speech lisping slightly, manner aggressive and often quick both to offend and to take offense, he had a habit of coming out suddenly with awkward questions. He would deliver mercilessly realistic verdicts on French personalities and events, and amuse himself by deflating swollen heads by smart pinpricks of his own devising. His stock was then very high, even though his first request on arrival was for a tour of the prisons. All the time he showed a magnificent facility for analysis, a lively grasp of realities, and an aptitude for polemic that was designed to leave a trail of indignation wherever he went. He became one of the leaders of the International and a member of its Executive Committee. Together with Rosmer and Pierre Monatte, he assumed the leadership of the French Communist Party, born at the 1920 split at Tours. Souvarine, despite his expulsion from the Comintern in 1924, was for some ten years to be one of the most trenchant and perceptive brains of European Communism.

I was on very close terms with both of the French Communist groups in Russia, and was more or less the leader of the one in Petrograd. These groups formed striking instances of the law whereby mass movements transform individuals, impel them into unpredictable courses of development, and mold their convictions. They also illustrated the law that the ebb tide of events carries men away just as surely as the flood tide brings them in. Although their ranks included several former French Socialists (whose inclinations had been quite alien to Bolshevism), these zealous Communists, who for the most part were

perfectly sincere, came from all points of the political horizon only to make a speedy departure once again in equally variegated directions.



Meeting of French Communist Group, Moscow c. 1920. Serge, seated center, Marcel Body, second from left

The Moscow group was a little nest of vipers, although it was led by Pierre Pascal,* a man of exemplary character. The quarrels, grudges, denunciations, and counter-denunciations of its two leading figures of the time, Henri Guilbeaux* and Jacques Sadoul,* completely demoralized it and finally earned the attentions of the Cheka. Guilbeaux's whole life was a perfect example of the failure who, despite all his efforts, skirts the edge of success without ever managing to achieve it. Verhaeren, Romain Rolland, and Lenin (in Switzerland) had all taken him seriously. During the war, he had published a revolutionary pacifist journal in Geneva. This brought upon him the honorable distinction of a death sentence in 1918 or 1919 and a bizarre acquittal by the French Council of War a decade later. He wrote cacophonous poetry, kept a card index full of gossip about his comrades, and plagued the Cheka with confidential notes. He wore green shirts and pea-green ties with greenish suits; everything about him, including his crooked face and his eyes, seemed to have a touch of mold. (He died in Paris, about 1938, by then an anti-Semite, having published two books proving Mussolini to be the only true successor of Lenin.)

Jacques Sadoul was quite different: a Paris lawyer, an army captain, an information officer in Russia on behalf of Albert Thomas,* a

member of the Comintern Executive, a flatterer of Lenin and Trotsky, a great charmer, a splendid raconteur, a sybarite, and a cool careerist to boot. However, he had produced a volume of *Letters* on the Revolution, which is still a document of the first importance. He had been condemned to death in France for crossing over to the Bolshevik side, but was one day to return home, times having changed, with an acquittal. After that he trailed alongside the full course of Stalinism, both as a lawyer acting for Soviet interests and as an agent in Parliamentary circles, though at heart he did not entertain the slightest illusion about Russia. The bread of bitterness tasted by Oppositionists held no temptations for him.

René Marchand, once the Petrograd correspondent for the Catholic and reactionary *Figaro*, was a fresh convert troubled by perpetual crises of conscience. He was soon to go off to Turkey, there to renounce Bolshevism and become an apologist, doubtless a sincere one, for Kemal Ataturk.

The outstanding figure in the Moscow French Communist group was Pierre Pascal, probably a distant descendant of Blaise Pascal, of whom he reminded me. I had met him in Moscow in 1919. There, his head, shaven Russian-style, sporting a big Cossack mustache and smiling perpetually with his bright eyes, he would walk through the city barefoot and clad in a peasant tunic to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, where he used to draft messages for Chicherin. A loyal and circumspect Catholic, he used St. Thomas's *Summa* to justify his adherence to Bolshevism and even his approval of the Terror. (The texts of the learned saint lent themselves admirably to this task.) Pascal led an ascetic life, sympathizing with the Workers' Opposition and hobnobbing with the anarchists. He had been a lieutenant with the French Military Mission, in charge of coding; he had crossed over to the Revolution in the middle of the intervention, to dedicate himself to it body and soul. He discussed its mystical significance with Berdyaev and translated Blok's* poems. He was to suffer terribly as the birth of totalitarianism progressed. I met him again in Paris in 1936. He was now a professor at the Sorbonne, the author of a solid biography of the Archpriest Avvakum, and more or less a Conservative. We, who had almost been brothers, could not talk together about the battle of Madrid . . .

The Executive had decided, on Russian initiative of course, to set up a trade union International affiliated to the Comintern. Salomon Abramovich Lozovsky (or Dridzo), an ex-Menshevik of recent vintage and an inexhaustible orator, was in charge of the new organization. A pleasant beard, geniality, good-bloke-ishness, a certain familiarity with the West, a knowledge of French, and an always flexible spine assured his longevity. He had the air of a slightly fastidious schoolmaster amidst his worldwide assortment of trade union militants whose political horizons did not extend very far beyond their own working-class districts at home. Not far from him, a one-eyed giant would pass through the crowd, downcast and solitary, but now and then distributing vigorous thumps on the shoulders of his mates. This was Bill Haywood a former timber man, organizer of the IWW,* who had come to end his days in the stuffy rooms of the Lux Hotel, among Marxists not one of whom tried to understand him and whom he scarcely understood himself. Still, he got a big thrill out of the red flags in the public squares.

Here too I met a Russian militant who had been in a British prison and was now home from Latin America: Dr. Alexandrov, I think. He was thirty-five, with a swarthy commonplace face, dark hair, and black mustache, very well-informed on all the happenings in the great world outside. He was later to become Comrade Borodin, the Russian political adviser to the Kuomintang at Canton, before relapsing into obscurity... One rainy evening, a modest Hungarian left my house on his way to Estonia and the coach driver deposited him in the mud. It was Mathias Rakosi.*

On the whole, the foreign delegates were a rather disappointing crowd, charmed at enjoying appreciable privileges in a starving country, quick to adulate, and reluctant to think. Few workers could be seen among them, but plenty of politicians. "How pleased they are," Jacques Mesnil remarked to me, "to be able to watch parades, at long last, from the official platform!" The influence of the International was expanded only at the expense of quality. We began to ask ourselves whether it had not been a grave error to split the Socialist movement to form new little parties, incapable of effective action, fed with ideas and money by the Executive's emissaries, and fated to become

propaganda factories for the Soviet Government. We were already putting these problems to ourselves, but were reassured by the instability of Western Europe and the wave of enthusiasm which still held us. All the same, I did conclude that, in the International as well, the danger lay in ourselves.

The New Economic Policy was, in the space of a few months, already giving marvelous results. From one week to the next, the famine and the speculation were diminishing perceptibly. Restaurants were opening again and, wonder of wonders, pastries that were actually edible were on sale at a ruble apiece. The public was beginning to recover its breath, and people were apt to talk about the return of capitalism, which was synonymous with prosperity. On the other hand, the confusion among the Party rank and file was staggering. For what did we fight, spill so much blood, agree to so many sacrifices? asked the Civil War veterans bitterly. Usually these men lacked all the necessities—clothes, decent homes, money—and now everything was turning back into market value. They felt that money, the vanquished foe, would soon come into its kingdom once again.

I personally was less pessimistic. I was glad that the change had taken place, though its reactionary side—the outright obliteration of every trace of democracy—worried and even distressed me. Would any other resolution of the drama of War Communism have been possible? This was by now a problem of only theoretical interest, but one worthy of some reflection. On this I developed some ideas, which I remember expounding on one occasion particularly, at a confidential meeting I had at the Lux Hotel with two Spanish Socialists. (Fernando de los Rios was one of them). They ran as follows:

Through its intolerance and its arrogation of an absolute monopoly of power and initiative in all fields, the Bolshevik regime was floundering in its own toils, spreading a sort of general paralysis throughout the country. Concessions to the peasantry were indispensable, but small-scale manufacture, medium-scale trading, and certain industries could have been revived merely by appealing to the initiative of groups of producers and consumers. By freeing the State-strangled cooperatives, and inviting various associations to take over the management of different branches of economic activity, an enor-

mous degree of recovery could have been achieved straightaway. The country was short of both shoes and leather, but the rural areas had leather, and shoemakers' cooperatives would have easily got hold of it and, once left to themselves, would have sprung into action at once. Of necessity they would have charged relatively high prices, but the State could, in the process of assisting their operations, have exercised a downward pressure upon their prices, which in any case would have been lower than those demanded by the black market. In Petrograd I could see what was happening to the book trade: the stocks of the bookshops, which had been confiscated, were rotting away in cellars that as often as not were flooded with water in the spring. We were most thankful to the thieves who salvaged a goodly number of books and put them back, clandestinely, into circulation. The book trade could, if it had been turned over to associations of book lovers, have speedily recovered its health. In a word, I was arguing for a "Communism of associations"—in contrast to the Communism of the State variety. The competition inherent in such a system and the disorder inevitable in all beginnings would have caused less inconvenience than did our stringently bureaucratic centralization, with its muddle and paralysis. I thought of the total plan not as something to be dictated by the State from on high, but rather as resulting from the harmonizing, by congresses and specialized assemblies, of initiatives from below. However, since the Bolshevik mind had already ordained other solutions, it was a vision confined to the realms of pure theory.

Ever since Kronstadt some of my friends and I had been asking ourselves what jobs we were going to do. We had not the slightest desire to enter the ruling bureaucracy and become heads of offices or secretaries of institutions. I was offered entry into a diplomatic career, in the Orient at first. I was attracted by the prospect of the Orient, but not by diplomacy. We thought we had found a way out. We would found an agricultural colony in the heart of the Russian countryside; while the NEP reinstated bourgeois habits in the towns and furnished the new rulers with sinecures and easy careers, we would live close to the earth, in the wilds. The earth of Russia, with its sad and calm expanses, is endlessly fascinating. Without much trouble we found a large, abandoned estate north of Petrograd, not far from Lake Ladoga,

comprising some hundred acres of woodland and waste field, thirty head of cattle, and a landlord's residence. There, together with French Communists, Hungarian prisoners of war, a Tolstoyan doctor, and my father-in-law Russakov, we founded "the French Commune of Novaya-Ladoga."

We made a valiant beginning to this experiment, which turned out to be very hard going. The estate had been abandoned because the peasants would not agree to exploit it collectively; they demanded that it be shared out among them. Two chairmen of short-lived communes there had been murdered in the space of eighteen months. A print worker who represented the Cheka in the district advised us to make sure that we kept on the right side of the muzhiks or else risk them "taking a torch to the whole place." The woods were of beautiful Scandinavian trees with light foliage, luminous and secluded clearings, a gentle river running through the pastures, and a great wooden farmhouse where we found the only things no one had thought to carry off: cast-iron beds of the type favored by newly wealthy merchants. Almost all the farm equipment had been stolen. As for the four horses we had been promised, we obtained three exhausted animals and a one-eyed mare that had a slight limp, whom we named Perfect. We had carried on our backs most of our supplies from Petrograd, as well as ropes, tools, matches, and lamps, for which we could get no paraffin, anyway.

Contact with the town demanded a series of feats of strength. The link between us and Novaya-Lagoda was an overgrown lane through a wood that ran for about twenty kilometers, but in this desolate place there was absolutely nothing except for the slumbering authorities, in terror of the general hostility. With a sack over my back, I frequently made the trip to Petrograd. I journeyed up the Neva, broad, dark, and green like the sea and bounded by peaceful woods, under unclouded skies. At Schlüsselburg we had to get onto an unlikely tub so crammed with poor people carrying sacks that it often got stuck on sand in the channel and could not get afloat again. At that point, we had to unload a crowd of passengers, furious and rightly outraged, who were pushed off by the others without mercy. Those nearest the side bore the brunt of the operation and the grumblers ended up in the drink,

from which we fished them out fraternally with poles. I once did this trip standing on a metal plate, my back to the scorching funnel. The autumn wind was freezing my face and chest and the heat from the boiler was roasting my back; the scene was spectacular as the bleak prison fort of Schlüsselburg was slowly sinking into blue horizon. On disembarkation, I had to walk at least twenty kilometers through forest paths and for this reason we often discussed if it was a good idea to carry a revolver on your belt. While it was certainly sensible to carry a weapon, there was always the chance that someone might murder you for it... Nothing ever happened to me, except for suffering from thirst. Once, in the middle of the woods, I knocked at an attractive little house whose windows displayed geraniums in full bloom. I asked for a glass of water. The peasant woman suspiciously asked me if I had a handkerchief. "Yes, why?" I replied. "Because here, for the likes of you, a glass of water costs one handkerchief." "Go to hell, you miserable Christians!" I left her, crossing herself feverishly.

The village nearby boycotted us, although the children came at all hours to stare at the extraordinary creatures that we were. At the same time they spied everywhere, and if you forgot a shovel it disappeared at once. One night our entire stock of corn, which was to last for both food and seed until harvest time, was stolen from us. It was a real state of famine and siege. Every night we waited up in case anyone tried to set the house on fire. We knew who was hiding our corn, but we did not, as they expected, go out with our revolvers to search for it, which only increased the suspicion and hatred surrounding us. Every night we expected them to try to set the house on fire. A great discovery allowed us to enjoy sour, warming soups even if they were not very nutritious: a barrel of pickled cucumbers, in one of the cellars... Gaston Bouley, former Captain of assault troops in the trenches of Argonne, then soldier in the Munich Commune, and now our groom, nightly proposed at dinner that we eat the one-eyed mare. At night, when it was my turn, I would dress in the dark so I could not to be seen through the cracks in the shutters, go quietly to the door, open it abruptly and leap out, armed with a revolver and a sharpened stake. Beware of the hatchet blow from behind the door, patrol around the house all night.

The peasants had all the necessities, but refused to sell anything to the "Jews" and "Antichrists" that we were. We decided to break this blockade; I went off to the village with Dr. N——, an Old Believer and Tolstoyan whose musical voice and benign solemnity would, we hoped, have some effect. A peasant woman curtly refused us everything we asked for. The doctor opened the neck of his blouse and brought out the little golden cross that he wore over his breast. "We are Christians too, little sister!" Their faces lit up and we were given eggs! And little girls made so bold as to come to see us in the evenings, when we would all sing French songs together... However, it could not last: in three months hunger and weariness forced us to abandon the project.

Since Kronstadt there had been a revival of the Terror in Petrograd. The Cheka had just "liquidated" the Tagantsev conspiracy by executing some thirty people. I had known Professor Tagantsev a little: a skinny little old man with white side-whiskers, a jurist and one of the longest-established university teachers in the former capital. With him they shot a lawyer named Bak to whom I used to send translation jobs and who had never concealed his counterrevolutionary opinions from me. Also shot, God knows why, was the little sculptor Bloch, who used to erect in public squares sculptures of angry workers, in the style of Constantin Meunier. "Do you know anything?" his wife asked me. I could not find out anything; the Cheka had become a lot more remote than it had once been... At the same time they executed the splendid poet Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilev, my comrade and adversary back in Paris. I called on his home at the Moyka Art House, where he had a room with his very young wife, a tall girl with a slender neck and the eyes of a terrified gazelle. It was a huge room, with murals showing swans and lotuses—it had once been the bathroom of a merchant who had a taste for poetry with this sort of imagery. Gumilev's young wife said to me in a low voice, "Haven't you heard? They took him away three days ago."

The comrades at the Soviet Executive gave me news which was both reassuring and disturbing: Gumilev was being very well treated at the Cheka, he had spent some nights there reciting his poems—poems overflowing with stately energy—to the Chekists, but he had

admitted to having drafted certain political documents for the counterrevolutionary group. All this seemed likely enough. Gumilev had never concealed his ideas. During the Kronstadt revolt the circle at the university must have believed that the regime was about to fall, and had thought to assist in its liquidation. The "conspiracy" could have gone no further than that. The Cheka made ready to shoot all of them: "This isn't the time to go soft!" One comrade traveled to Moscow to ask Dzerzhinsky a question: "Were we entitled to shoot one of Russia's two or three poets of the first order?" Dzerzhinsky answered, "Are we entitled to make an exception of a poet and still shoot the others?" It was dawn, at the edge of a forest, when Gumilev fell, his cap pulled down over his eyes, a cigarette hanging from his lips, showing the same calm he had expressed in one of the poems he brought back from Ethiopia: "*And fearless I shall appear before the Lord God.*" That, at least, is the tale as it was told to me. Over and over again, with mingled admiration and horror, I read the verses which he had entitled "The Worker," in which he describes a gentle, gray-eyed man who, before going to bed, finishes making "*the bullet that is going to kill me...*" The faces of Nikolai and Olga Gumilev were to haunt me for years afterwards.

At the same time another of our greatest poets was dying of debility, which was the same thing as starvation: Alexander Blok, at the age of forty-one. I knew him only slightly, but admired him boundlessly. Together with Andrei Bely* and Sergei Yesenin he had inspired the mystical vision of the Revolution: "the Christ crowned with roses" who, "invisible and silent," walks in the snowstorm before the Twelve Red Guards, soldiers in peaked caps whose rifles are aimed at the city's shadows. He had told me of his rebellions against the Revolution's new absolutism, and I had heard him reading his last great work. Two of his poems, "The Twelve" and "The Scythians," were being translated into many languages, and they remain spiritual monuments of that era. The first proclaimed the Messianic character of the Revolution; the second revealed its ancient, Asiatic face. Contradictory, but so was reality. Blok was a gentlemanly Westerner, rather like an Englishman, blue-eyed and with a long, serious face that hardly ever smiled. He was restrained in his gestures, with a fine dignity about

him. Ever since the rise of Symbolism, fifteen years ago, he had been the foremost Russian poet. I followed his corpse to the Vassili-Ostrov cemetery at the moment when the Cheka was passing sentence on Gumilev.

I belonged to the last surviving free-thought society; in all probability I was the only Communist member. This was the Volfila (Free Philosophic Society), whose real guiding spirit was another brilliant poet, Andrei Bely. We organized big public debates, in which one of the speakers was often a shabby, squinting little man, wretchedly dressed, whose face was scored with perpendicular wrinkles. He was Ivanov-Razumnik, the historian and philosopher, still one of the finest representatives of the old revolutionary intelligentsia of Russia. Sometimes the discussion would dissolve into grand lyrical effusions on the problems of existence, consciousness, and the Cosmos. Like Blok, both Bely and Ivanov-Razumnik were somewhat attracted, by reason of their revolutionary romanticism, to the persecuted and silenced Left Social-Revolutionary Party. On account of this sympathy, and because the philosophical flights of the two poets trespassed beyond the bounds of Marxism, the Cheka and the Party had their eye on the Volfila. Its organizers wondered every day whether they were going to be arrested. We held our private meetings at Andrei Bely's. At the time he was living in a huge room of the old military headquarters opposite the Winter Palace, just above the offices of the police militia. There we would ask one another how we could preserve liberty of thought as a principle, and prove that it was not a counterrevolutionary principle. Bely suggested convening a World Congress of Free Thought in Moscow, and inviting to it Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, and Gandhi. A chorus of voices cried back: "It'll never be allowed!" I told them that if they appealed to intellectuals abroad, who were certainly incapable of any real understanding of revolutionary Russia, the Russian intellectuals ran a risk of discrediting the Revolution, which was already the object of indiscriminate attacks by the émigrés.

Andrei Bely, a master of style comparable to James Joyce, a splendid writer of poetry and prose, and a theosophist (or anthroposophist, as he himself termed it) was just over forty. He was embarrassed at

being bald, and so always wore a black skullcap beneath which his great seer's eyes, of a stony greenish blue, gave out a continual glitter. The vitality and variety of his mind was prodigious. His whole behavior reflected spiritual idealism, with sometimes the postures of a visionary, sometimes the frank outbursts of a child. In the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution, he had won fame through a psychological novel about the period, a mystical, revolutionary work impregnated with German and Latin culture. Now he was beginning to feel that his great energies were bankrupt.

"What can I do now in this life?" he asked me despondently one evening. "I cannot live outside this Russia of ours and I cannot breathe within it!"

I answered that the state of siege was sure to end, and that Western Socialism would open out vast prospects for Russia. "Do you think so?" he said thoughtfully. However, at the beginning of the autumn of 1921, as the carnage of the Terror was filling us with horror, we saw even the Volfila disintegrate.

I am well aware that terror has been necessary up till now in all great revolutions, which do not happen according to the taste of well-intentioned men, but spontaneously, with the violence of tempests; that the individual has as much weight as straw in a hurricane; and that the duty of revolutionaries is to employ the only weapons that history affords us if we are not to be overwhelmed through our own folly. But the perpetuation of terror, after the end of the Civil War and the transition to a period of economic freedom, was an immense and demoralizing blunder. I was and still am convinced that the new regime would have felt a hundred times more secure if it had henceforth proclaimed its reverence, as a Socialist government, for human life and the rights of all individuals without exception. I still ask myself, having closely observed the probity and intelligence of its leaders, why it didn't. What psychoses of fear and of power prevented it?

The tragedies continued. From Odessa we had monstrous news: the Cheka had just shot Fanny Baron* (the wife of Aaron Baron) and Lev Chorny, one of the theoreticians of Russian anarchism. Lev Chorny had been well-known to me in Paris twelve years earlier. A figure straight out of a Byzantine icon, with a waxy complexion and

eyes that flashed from hollow sockets, he lived in the Latin Quarter, cleaning restaurant windows and then going off to write his *Sociometry* beneath the trees of the Luxembourg Gardens. Usually, he had just been released from some prison or penal colony; a methodical mind, a fervent believer, and an ascetic. His death incensed Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. During the Third Congress of the International Emma Goldman had thought of making a scene, after the manner of the English suffragettes, by chaining herself to a bench on one of the public balconies and shouting out her protest to the Congress. The Russian anarchists had persuaded her to change her mind. In the country of the Scythians such demonstrations had little value; far better to keep on nagging at Lenin and Zinoviev. Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, although they had come to Russia motivated by deep sympathies, were now living in such a state of indignation that they were unable to exercise any impartiality of judgment, and all they saw in the great revolution were its miserable failings, an inhuman unleashing of authority, the end of all its hopes. My relations with them were becoming difficult, just as difficult as with Zinoviev, whom I had often questioned about the persecution of the libertarians—and whom I had been avoiding since Kronstadt.

Meanwhile, our persistent campaign for the release of the victimized prisoners had met with some success: ten anarchist detainees, including the syndicalist Maximov and Boris Voline, were authorized to leave Russia, and others were freed. Kamenev promised that Aaron Baron would be banished, a promise that was not fulfilled, since the Cheka was to oppose it. Certain Mensheviks, notably Martov, also obtained passports to travel abroad.

What with Kronstadt, these tragedies, and the influence of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman on the working-class movement in the Old World and the New, an unbridgeable gap was now to open between Marxists and libertarians. Later in history, this division would play a fatal role: it was one of the causes of the intellectual confusion and final defeat of the Spanish Revolution. In this respect, my worst forebodings were fulfilled. The majority of Bolsheviks, however, considered the libertarian movement to be petty bourgeois and in rapid decline, even in the process of natural extinction.

The American background of Goldman and Berkman estranged them from the Russians, turning them into representatives of an idealistic generation that had completely vanished in Russia. (I have no doubt that they were just as disconcerted and indignant over a good deal of what happened in Makhno's movement.) They embodied the humanistic rebellion of the turn of the century: Goldman with her organizing flair and practical disposition, her narrow but generous prejudices, and her self-importance, typical of American women devoted to social work; Berkman with the inward tension that sprang from his idealism in years long past. His eighteen years in an American prison had frozen him in the attitudes of his youth when, as an act of solidarity with a strike, he had offered up his life by shooting at one of the steel barons. When this tension relaxed he became dejected, and I could not help thinking that he was often troubled by ideas of suicide. In fact, it was only much later that he was to end his life, in 1936, on the Côte d'Azur. Both of them deeply resented my divulging in a German journal the existence of Bakunin's *Confession*, addressed to Tsar Nicholas I from the depths of a dungeon. This very human document—which in no way diminishes Bakunin—had been discovered in the archives of the Empire and purloined immediately by the archivists. I publicized its existence and contents so as to prevent any future evasions. Some "Marxist" morons immediately proclaimed the disgrace of Bakunin. Some equally idiotic anarchists accused me of slandering him. These polemics were of little significance.

The winds of an immeasurable calamity swept upon us from the parched plains of the Volga. The Civil War had crossed these regions, and now drought had destroyed them. Millions, starved of all necessities, fled from the famine. I saw them coming up even as far as Petrograd, on foot or in carts. Not everyone had the strength or the means to flee; millions were to die on the spot. This scourge, which struck at both the Ukraine and the Crimea, devastated areas populated by twenty-three million inhabitants. The blow was so severe that authority tottered. Could the Bolshevik dictatorship overcome the ghastly specter of death? I met Maxim Gorky, bony, gray, and frowning as never before. He told me of the formation of a committee of leading intellectuals and non-Communist specialists, which was to appeal to

all the latent energies of the country, and might well be the germ of tomorrow's democratic government. (The Government at first recognized this committee, which was headed by the Marxist revisionist economist Prokopovich and the Liberal publicist Ekaterina Kusskova; then it had these two arrested and expelled from the country.)

I did not agree. The revolutionary regime seemed to me already so solidly established that the skeleton hand of famine could not snatch power away from it. And, despite everything, I thought it was absolutely right to want to live; I had faith in its future, and I understood that Russia would be incapable of any fresh outburst for some years.

Kronstadt, the NEP, the continuation of the terror, and the regime's intolerance were wreaking such confusion among the Party cadre that we were in a total moral crisis. (At Kronstadt, the great majority of Communists had gone along with the rebels' movement.) The two groups of friends whose company I kept, the French and the Russian, both suffered from a similar distress. Most of my comrades decided to abandon either political life or the Party. Novomirsky, a high official in the International, an ex-terrorist from 1905, an ex-convict and former anarchist who had been won for Bolshevism by Lenin's warmth, now sent his membership card back to the Central Committee on account of his fundamental disagreements. He devoted himself to scientific work, and nobody thought of bearing him any grudge. (All the same, he was to be remembered in 1937 when he disappeared, along with his wife, into the concentration camps.) One of our common friends casually crossed the frontier to Poland and went on to live in France "in a nicely decadent bourgeois democracy where you think more or less aloud." Hellfer, a French friend with a wry sense of humor, remarked, "I thought I was seeing the world changing, but now I realize that it's the same old thing. I'm off to Tahiti where a friend lives. From now on all I want to see is coconut trees, monkeys, and as few civilized people as possible." He did not get quite as far and became a chicken farmer in some obscure village in France. Marcel Body, a Socialist worker, arranged to be sent to the Soviet Embassy in Oslo. Another got sent to Turkey. Another went to manage a sawmill in the heart of the Far East. Pierre Pascal quietly withdrew from the Party and earned his living as a translator, at the same time working

on his history of the schism of the Russian Church. I was tougher inside, and enjoyed (as I think) a broader vision of the Revolution, as well as having less individualistic sentiment in my makeup. I did not feel disheartened or disoriented. I was disgusted at certain things, psychologically exhausted by the Terror, and tormented by the mass of wrongs that I could see growing, which I was powerless to counteract.

Serge holding baby Vlady, with Liuba and her sister Jenny Russakova

My conclusions were that the Russian Revolution, left to itself, would probably, in one way or another, collapse (I did not see how: would it be through war or domestic reaction?); that the Russians, who had made superhuman efforts to build a new society, were more or less at the end of their strength; and that relief and salvation must come from the West. From now on it was necessary to work to build a Western working-class movement capable of supporting the Russians and, one day, superseding them. I decided to leave for Central Europe, which seemed to be the focus of events to come. (The condition of my wife, who was now on the verge of tuberculosis as a result of all the privations, was another factor that encouraged me in this direction.) Zinoviev and the comrades on the Executive offered me a post in Berlin, working in illegality. If danger was within us, salvation must lie within us no less.

5.
EUROPE AT THE DARK CROSSROADS
1922–1926

THE LAST few weeks before my departure were partly taken up by a case that was both tragic and banal. A distant relative of mine, an old officer named Schmerling who had joined the Red Army, was appearing with three other military personnel before the Army's revolutionary tribunal. Embezzlement of supplies: death penalty. Schmerling was an honest old man; in his position of logistics officer, he was under the orders of a Communist commissar who would often send him bits of paper ordering delivery to the bearer of a certain quantity of food... Unlawful procedure—but was the "specialist," the former bourgeois officer, in a position to disobey a commissar who could have him shot for any number of reasons? Schmerling would comply, knowing full well that this would end badly. In the event, the arrests were accompanied by a press campaign demanding that the runaway embezzlement of army supplies be "ruthlessly suppressed." Soviet law allowed any citizen to appear for the defense before the courts; I became Schmerling's defense counsel, determined to get him out of there without too much regard for legal fictions. The trial took place in the lobby of a former major bank, in Gogol Street, previously Morskaya, still divided up by gray marble counters. From the start, the mind-set of the judges was apparent: make an example. Only chilly questions and chilling replies issued from their three forbidding heads. Obviously, the application of such lethally utilitarian orders had nothing to do with the exercise of justice. I had recently attended a trial in Moscow of a high-ranking counterrevolutionary officer where the atmosphere had been heated and confrontational; the case ended with a principled conviction. Here, in contrast, the robot-judges were iniquitously determined to bring down the ax blade. The other de-

fense counsel pleaded with me not to intervene and annoy such dangerous citizens; the suggestion had probably come from the judges themselves and I yielded. The four defendants were automatically condemned to death, the sentence to be carried out within seventy-two hours—and it was Saturday! The next day, Sunday, did not allow for any appeal procedures for a reprieve. You had to send a cable immediately to Soviet Central Executive in Moscow, but the telegraph services accepted only cables bearing an official stamp. Normally, for pleas for mercy, the court put its stamp at the disposal of the defense lawyers. I asked one of the judges, a young man, red hair, thin mouth, long sour face, who brusquely refused. "Are you really so determined to shoot this poor man?" "I don't have to answer to you!" Ullrich was the name of this young judge with a face of polished stone and he had his place in history. In 1936, it was he who presided at the trial of the Sixteen (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Ivan Smirnov). I went to get the stamp of the International. In Moscow the secretary of the All-Russia Executive, Avel Enukidze, formally promised me a pardon, although not before the end of the current series of trials... The veteran officer spent many months on death row, expecting the final call. He was pardoned and rejoined the services. His family never forgave me those tortuous delays.

The train crossed a dismal no-man's-land furrowed with abandoned trenches, bristling with barbed wire. Soldiers in gray great-coats, wearing the red star on their cloth helmets, watched us sadly as we went by. They were gaunt and gray as the earth. Farewell, comrades!

From Narva onwards, Narva the first town in Estonia, with its ancient gabled houses in the old German style, one suddenly breathed an air that was both less heavy and less bracing. We were coming from a huge entrenched camp governed by the harsh laws of congealed idealism, and entering instead a small, neat, comfortable bourgeois province whose modest shops we viewed as opulent and whose elaborate uniforms appeared loathsome and grotesque. With its puny million of inhabitants, without an economic hinterland, Estonia made a serious pretense at being a modern State, complete with Parliament, generals, and foreign diplomacy. Three parts Russified, it was now

unlearning the language of Tolstoy, dismissing the Russian teachers from the University of Dorpat (now Tartu), and conjuring up a national intelligentsia lacking any idiom in common with the rest of the world. How long would it last, and at what price?

At Tallinn (lately Reval), I stopped, overwhelmed with emotion, in front of some houses that were being built. I had seen so much destruction that the simple work of bricklayers moved me deeply. From its hill the old castle dominated the empty streets, which were paved with the little pointed cobbles of medieval days. A horse-drawn omnibus went along a street lined with shops and cafés that sold pastries. At the sight of any one of these shops, our children of Russia would have shouted for joy. In the Volga territories the children of Russia were turning into living skeletons, hundreds of thousands of them. Better than through any theory, I now understood the meaning of the politics of "self-determination of nationalities," raised as it was to perfection by the blockade of the Revolution.

I, my wife Liuba, and my son Vladimir,* who was not yet a year old, were traveling illegally; it was, however, an easy form of illegality. From Petrograd as far as Stettin and several other Western cities, there were no obstacles in our path. There were a dozen of us, delegates and agents of the International, discreetly (or sometimes openly) accompanied by a diplomatic courier named Slivkin, a strapping, jovial young man who was entrusted with every imaginable variety of smuggling, and had bought over all the police, customs, and frontier officials along our itinerary. At the last moment we had discovered that the OMS office (*Otdiel Mezhdunarodnoi Sviazy*, or International Relations Section of the Comintern Executive) had, in entering the details on our Belgian passports, forgotten to mention our child...

"That's nothing serious," Slivkin told me. "During the frontier examinations I'll make a show of playing with him." At Stettin he put himself to more trouble in getting an "invalid" through: a tall, thin young man with dark, piercing eyes and an ashen face, sought by every policeman in the Reich as one of the organizers (Béla Kun was another) of the March 1921 insurrection. This was Guralski, whose real name was Heifitz, once a militant in the Jewish Bund, and now one of the hardest-working agents of the International.

Without any difficulty, I bought from the Berlin Polizeipräsidium, at the price of ten dollars and a few cigars, a genuine residence permit that, moreover, transformed me from a Belgian into a Pole. Soon I had to change my nationality again, this time into a Lithuanian, since the cafés in Berlin were plastered with notices saying: "No Poles served here." It was the time when Poland had just annexed several mining districts in Upper Silesia, although a plebiscite had yielded a result that in fact favored the Reich. Germany was visibly gripped by a cold fury. Once, in a bar in the Kurfürstendamm, when I uttered a few words in Russian, a gentleman with face scars spun round: "Are you Polish?" "No," I replied, laughing, "Lithuanian..." "Fine then. Let's have a drink! If you had been Polish, I might even have killed you."

Inside post-Versailles Germany, governed as it was by the Social-Democratic President Ebert, and by the most democratic of republican constitutions, one breathed in the atmosphere of a collapsing world. Everything was just in its place: people were unassuming, kindly, industrious, bankrupt, wretched, debauched, and resentful. Right in the middle of town, beyond the dark Spree and the Friedrichstrasse, a huge railway station was being built. Bemedaled cripples from the Great War sold matches outside nightclubs in which girls, who had a price just like everything else, danced naked among the flower-decked tables of the diners. Capitalism was running riot, apparently under the inspiration of Hugo Stinnes,* and accumulating immense fortunes in the midst of insolvency. Everything was for sale: the daughters of the bourgeoisie in the bars, the daughters of the people in the streets, officials, import and export licenses, state papers, businesses in whose prospects nobody believed. The fat dollar and the puny, puffed-up coin of the victors ruled the roost, buying up everything, even human souls if they could. The Allied military missions, burdened with the impossible task of controlling disarmament, walked around in their smart uniforms, surrounded by a polite but no less obvious hatred.

Permanent conspiracies of various sorts went on in limitless ramifications: the conspiracy of Rhineland separatists, financed from abroad; the conspiracy of reactionary military leagues; and the conspiracy of revolutionaries: our own. In philosophic language, Oswald

Spengler proclaimed *The Decline of the West*: come, look at the corpse of Egypt, ponder on the end of Rome. The revolutionary poets were publishing *Dammerung der Menschen* ("The Twilight of Mankind"). The portraits of Oskar Kokoschka palpitated in all their lines, colors, and volumes with a cosmic neurosis; the metallic touch of George Grosz traced the silhouettes of piggy bourgeois and robot jailers, with ghastly prisoners and workers living like grubs beneath them. Barlach made statues of peasants stupefied by fear. I myself wrote:

Life is like a sickness:
Red-hot iron the only cure
But instead they are using poisons.

The little pointed red-brick churches slumbered on the edges of squares that were carved up into allotments. The *Reichswehr*'s choicest old sweats, in heavy helmets, guarded a War Office whose windows were adorned with flowers. Raphael's Madonna, from within her brilliantly lit room in the Dresden gallery, gazed deeply, darkly, and goldenly at all comers. Organization had been so perfected that even in the utter solitude of the Saxony or Harz forests, I found waste-paper baskets and signboards saying SCHÖNES BLICK—Recommended or (as it were) Starred Landscape. At night the towns were magnificently lit up. Compared with our Russian penury, affluence had a lasting shock effect.

Germany was bled white. Nobody there had any real confidence in the future, and practically nobody had any idea of the public good. The capitalists lived in terror of the revolution. The impoverished petty bourgeoisie saw the old manners and hopes of yesterday vanishing beneath their eyes. Only the Social-Democrats believed in the future of capitalism, in the stabilization of German democracy, and even in the intelligence and benevolence of the victors of Versailles! They had the enlightened, optimistic attitudes of the liberal bourgeoisie of 1848. The youth, which was nationalistic and Socialist-inclined, would have nothing to do with them. My impression was that young people hoped for a revolution, and for an alliance with Russia to wage a revolutionary war. Energy, when it was divorced from reason, took

refuge in the military leagues; where it was colored by dogmatic reasoning, it gathered around the Communist Party. Charles Rappoport, pulling a wry smile on his bearded, cynical face, said to me, "There will be no German revolution for the same reason that there will be no counterrevolution in Russia: people are too tired and too hungry."

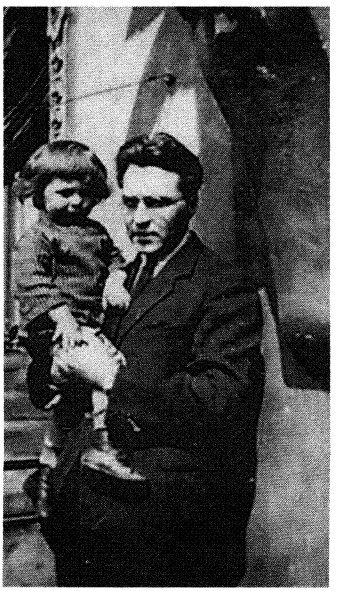
Seen from here, the Russian Revolution appeared as a superb exploit. It preserved almost all its halo of newly arisen justice and organization, as well as of unprecedented democracy. This was the case both with us and with the general public, and even with many reactionaries. The Social-Democratics were the only people who saw nothing but the cost of the Revolution, its despotic character, the famine, and the long wars. Determined not to follow the same arduous path, they tried instead to make the best of a capitalism that was at the end of its tether by modifying it, little by little. They settled down in the pores of the state, administrative bodies, schools, town halls, and police forces, and at times appeared irremovable. "What splendid powerlessness!" we would say. Our Soviet poverty, our improvised egalitarianism (with its very modest privileges for the rulers), our blazing creative will and revolutionists' dedication contrasted with the brutal self-seeking of speculation, the arrogant, imbecile luxury of the rich, and the shameful destitution of the masses; and so we could easily forgive the Revolution her unbending harshness, her errors and Spartan ways. In this decomposing bourgeois world we recovered our confidence.

I was on the editorial staff of *Inprekorr*, the press agency of the Comintern Executive, which published copious material, intended for the Labor press of the whole world, in three languages, German, English, and French. At my office at the *Rote Fahne*, I was successively Siegfried and Gottlieb; in town I was Dr. Albert; on my papers Viktor Klein; and, in my journeys to Russia, Alexei Berlovsky, a former Russian prisoner of war in Germany. Victor Serge datelined his articles (which were reprinted as far away as China) from Kiev, a city to which, as it happened, I had never been. I appeared only very seldom at the Soviet Legation in the Unter den Linden where, all the same, I managed to meet Krestinsky and Yakubovich. If I chanced to pass Radek

on the Kurfürstendamm, we would exchange a knowing glance, but never greet each other, in case one of us was being followed.

At Grunewald I used to visit a friendly house, occupied by a celebrated French Communist, Jacques Sadoul, living (naturally) under a false name; in the next-door garden we could see a stout gentleman taking a stroll among his rosebushes: Captain Eckhart, one of the leaders of the "Black" (i.e., secret) Reichswehr and the military conspiracy. At Zehlendorff, in a rose-pink, solid-looking villa shaded by tall pines (this belonged to Eduard Fuchs, who was active despite his years), we outlaws and emissaries of the International would meet from time to time, to talk Socialism or hear a little music. The guests there included Radek, the Vuyovich brothers, Otto Pohl (the Austrian Ambassador), L.-O. Frossard, and various Russians. Fuchs, a social historian, was a collector of works by Daumier and Slevogt, Chinese and Japanese objets d'art, and obscure facts about the dark corners of the German Revolution. A man on the fringe of the Communist movement, he was still rendering it services that were by no means devoid of risk.

For various reasons, it was not easy for me to find lodgings with my little family, often augmented by the presence of some comrade whose papers were not in order. For a long time I lived in a working-class tenement near the Anhalt station, in the home of some Spartakist workers. At the most critical moment, during the preparations for the 1923 insurrection, I lived in a small apartment in Schöneberg, right opposite the Reichswehr barracks... And I noticed that my couriers, dauntless young men, apart from sporting the militants' corduroy suit, did not bother removing the red star from their lapels whenever they came to see me! Several times I just missed be-



Serge with Vlady in Berlin

ing arrested in the most idiotic way. When I was on the point of entering the doorway to the *Rote Fahne* office, my wife held me back by the arm: "Let's walk on quickly, come on!" The vestibule was full of green Schutzpolizei uniforms. All the same it was a good idea to post them so openly. I took a small, separate office away in town as a commercial broker—what brand of commerce, I never discovered.

The editorial staff of *Inprekorr*, the intellectual and political mentor of the world Communist movement, was of an outstanding mediocrity. In charge was Julius Alpari, once a high official in the Hungarian Soviet regime, a bloated, artful, and well-informed individual, whose sole conception of his role was already that of a functionary discreetly heading, even through illegality, for an undisturbed career. He never committed himself on any issue, but rode along passively and gently in a spirit of revolutionary conformism awaiting its due reward. He would explain to me, grinning fatly: "When a pretty girl says No, it means Yes; when a diplomat says Yes, it means No; when I say Yes or No, it means neither Yes nor No..."

The German section was run by two deputies of the Prussian Landtag: Bartz, the cartoonists' image of the petty official behind his little window, and Franz Dahlem, a young man with hard features, a prominent nose and expressionless eyes. Dahlem, the toiler without personality, the militant without doubts, the fact gatherer without thoughts, never asked himself a question of the slightest vital interest but only carried out, all punctiliously, every instruction and directive he received. This was the Communist NCO type, neither a blockhead nor a thinker: obedient only. Bartz has died, a faithful working-class Deputy; Alpari continued his career as Comintern agent right up to the fall of Paris; Franz Dahlem, after Thaelmann's* arrest, became the leader of the German Communist Party, was interned in France, and then handed over to the Gestapo by the Vichy Government, in all likelihood to his death. He had conscientiously performed all the infamous routines of totalitarian Communism; he will die (if he has not already died) like a good NCO, courageously. Already around 1922, the International was unwittingly molding factotum officials, who were prepared to give passive obedience.

The march on Rome and the rise of Mussolini were understood by

no one in the International except a few isolated militants, who included myself since I had followed the progress of Fascism from fairly close quarters. The opinion of the leadership was that this was a piece of reactionary buffoonery that would soon die away and open the path to revolution. I opposed this view, saying that this new variety of counterrevolution had taken the Russian Revolution as its schoolmaster in matters of repression and mass manipulation through propaganda; further, it had succeeded in recruiting a host of disillusioned, power-hungry ex-revolutionaries; consequently, its rule would last for years.

The International and the Soviet Government were proceeding along two parallel paths, and with two distinct objectives: first, to form disciplined parties over the whole of Europe with a view to events to come; secondly, to achieve toleration from the capitalist world and thence credits for the reconstruction of Russia. If such credits had been forthcoming, the Soviet system would probably have evolved in a liberal direction. I know that, at the time of the Genoa Conference, in May 1922, Lenin and Kamenev were considering the revival of some degree of press freedom; there was talk of allowing a non-Party daily to be published in Moscow. A literary review, really independent of the party, did appear. A certain religious toleration was also envisaged, although the poverty of the State necessitated the seizure of precious metals from the churches, a measure which led to innumerable clashes and subsequent executions. Genoa was a setback for Russia, despite the flexibility displayed by Chicherin and Rakovsky. Chicherin made up for his losses at Rapallo, where he signed a treaty of friendship with Germany, thus positioning the Soviet Union decisively on the side of the losers of Versailles.

The Conference of the Three Internationals assembled the fraternal enemies for the first time around the same table (in one of the study rooms in the Reichstag): leaders of the Socialist International,* leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International (as we mockingly called the little groups conglomerated midway between the reformists and the Bolsheviks), leaders of the Third International. I attended the conference in my capacity as a journalist. These men presented a striking physical contrast. The Socialists, Abramovich, Vandervelde, and

Friedrich Adler, had the fine profiles of Western intellectuals and the behavior of competent lawyers; their whole comportment expressed moderation. Facing them were Clara Zetkin's* solid, powerful old face, the mobile, sardonic features of Radek, and Bukharin's impervious geniality. The Socialists insisted—and with good reason—that political persecution in Russia must be ended. Bukharin told me, "That's only an excuse. Those people are determined never to fight for Socialism." And he added, as though by way of a directive, "Our press must attack them mercilessly."

The trial of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Revolutionary Party actually ruined any chance of cooperation. The Social-Revolutionaries had taken part in the Civil War, against us. In 1918, Semionov, one of their terrorists, had organized the assassination in Petrograd of the Bolshevik orator Volodarsky; Dora Kaplan had shot Lenin. Semionov embraced Bolshevism and made a remarkably full confession (and later became a secret agent of the GPU). The background to the attempts against Lenin was closely investigated—the authors of the first attempt, in Petrograd, had meanwhile joined the Communist Party—and the trial ended with a suspended death sentence on the twelve principal defendants, who included Gotz,* Timofeyev, and Gerstein.

From Berlin, I observed the proceedings with great distress. Now that the Civil War was over, were we going to shed the blood of a defeated party which, in the old days, had furnished the Revolution with so many of its heroes? The Politburo hesitated. I heard it said: "We are moving towards an inevitable collision with the peasantry. This peasant party has certain prospects; consequently it must be beheaded." I conspired with several friends to try and prevent this calamity. Clara Zetkin, Jacques Sadoul, and Souvarine exerted pressure towards the same end; Maxim Gorky sent Lenin a letter breaking off all relations... No blood was spilt. Thirteen years later, I was to see the aged Gerstein die in almost complete destitution, deported to Orenburg. He was an unyielding, conscience-racked idealist who until his last breath remained loyal to his democratic beliefs. (Gotz was deported for a second time in 1936 to a town on the Volga. He had

been a senior official in the Finance Ministry, with real authority. He was tortured and killed in Alma-Ata in 1937.)

Shortly afterwards, at the end of 1922, I paid a short visit to Moscow. Russia was returning to life; Petrograd was bandaging its wounds and emerging from dilapidation. Nighttime, with the pitiful state of illumination, exuded a terrible depression, but people were no longer hungry and a brisk pace of living was in evidence everywhere. The Terror had ceased, without being formally abolished, and everyone tried hard to forget the nightmare of arrests and executions. A new literature was bursting out in the Serapion Brothers circle and among the writers, yesterday unknown, who overnight were now counted among the great: Boris Pilnyak,* Vsevolod Ivanov,* Konstantin Fedin. Their works were intense and impetuous, saturated with virile humanism and a critical spirit. They were rebuked because they were not at all Communistic, indeed very far from being so, but they were published, they were loved. The great tradition of Russian literature, interrupted during the stormy years, was being born again in the second year of peace! It was miraculous.

Small traders were springing up everywhere, crowds swarmed over the markets, the taverns exhaled their music, barefoot youngsters ran in the streets at dawn, following the cabs to offer flowers to lovers. There were plenty of beggars, but they were not dying of hunger. In official circles they were beginning to talk of the Reconstruction Plan advocated by Trotsky. It was a nation in convalescence, a nation on the march.

At the Kremlin I found the familiar atmosphere still there. An enlarged session of the Comintern Executive was studying certain problems whose nature escapes my memory. At it I met Amadeo Bordiga, gloomier, sturdier, and more quarrelsome than ever before, this time picking a quarrel over revolutionary morality. Zinoviev listened to him indulgently. Jacques Doriot* was becoming someone important...

Corruption, servility, intrigue, backstage talebearing, and the official mentality began to assume an increasing role in the functioning of the International. The worst of it was that anybody who wanted to preserve any influence or political office had to kowtow persistently to

the Russians and their emissaries. Besides, they had control of the cash, and the other parties presented the appearance of poor relations. Led by politicians accustomed to bourgeois living, these displayed no capacity for propaganda or action. The International would employ two or three methods to breathe some life into them: it would put "gray eminences" in charge of them, who were mostly Russian (and therefore strangers to the Western mind), as well as being devotees of Zinoviev; it sent them sizable funds; or it would remove the old time-honored politicians and replace them with young militants who were sometimes no more than young careerists. The Parties went from one crisis to another.

At the crossroads of Berlin, I encountered many delegates and emissaries. They included a young engineer from Saint-Denis named Jacques Doriot, who was in high esteem as a "real force." Frossard assured me of his intention to serve the Russian Revolution without falling back into the ways of the old Parliamentary Socialism of the Third Republic. Pierre Sémard, secretary of the railwaymen's union, a tall, poised man with a face typical of the Paris worker, spoke of the proletarianizing of the Party. Louis Sellier went into ecstasies over financial reform in Soviet Russia, a subject of which I immediately saw that he knew nothing.

Frossard broke with the International a few months later. Sémard was to remain loyal to the Party till his death, despite many humiliations, despite even the atrocious allegation that he had been a police agent, a charge with which he was hypocritically smeared when he was to be removed from the leadership. (The Nazis shot him in Paris on 15 April 1942.)

Marcel Cachin would relate how he had exhorted Lenin not to march on Warsaw: Oh, if only they had listened to him! Cachin was likable and openhearted. He had the graying hair and mustachioed face of an old sailor or miner, a passionate voice, and a relentlessly perfect French diction, appropriate for the Parliamentary orator that he was. His thinking was purely that of a platform speaker; he worshipped the Party and lived exclusively on his popularity. To keep his reputation going he would strive always to follow the strongest current of opinion, which he was quick to smell out. A rather intelligent

man, who could see practically everything that was going on, he experienced considerable anguish—for a long time I am sure—but he never rebelled. Where would he have been without his Party, his Parliament, etc.? On average, however, our human material and the men I have singled out from among many were of relatively good caliber.

The crisis over the reparations imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty grew worse from day to day. When Vorovsky, the old Marxist humanist and then Soviet Ambassador to Italy, died in Lausanne, riddled with bullets by a young White Russian émigré, the atmosphere in Germany was so acute that an order from Moscow came insisting on a great Communist and pro-Soviet demonstration while the corpse was in transit across our territory. The funeral van arrived at the Silesia station on a foggy evening. A dense crowd, complete with red banners, surrounded the gloomy building. Radek spoke from the back of a lorry laden with flowers and bristling with flags. Torches flamed all around him. His strident voice was carried away in the electric night air, but his short, austere silhouette could be clearly distinguished. Krestinsky,* the Ambassador, followed the procession on foot, protected only by a group of young German Communists.

Krestinsky was a man of outstanding intelligence, discretion, and courage. His whole life was dedicated to the Party of the Revolution but he was there as a sort of exile, having been dismissed from the General Secretaryship because of his democratic inclinations. He was still young, and astoundingly myopic, so that his shrewd eyes, hidden behind lenses a quarter of an inch thick, seemed to have a timid expression. With his tall, bare skull and his wisp of dark beard, he made one think of a scholar; actually he was a great practical technician of Socialism. He was against taking unnecessary risks, but was not afraid of them; indeed he was quite ready, if it came to it, to defend his Embassy at pistol-point, along with his secretaries and office staff. On that evening he refused to take precautions for his own safety, saying that it was proper that Soviet Russia's Ambassador to Berlin should expose himself to a little danger. The torchlight demonstration around Vorovsky's coffin marked the opening of the period of revolutionary mobilization.

The Cuno Government announced that Germany was incapable

of paying any more reparations. In this way the *Schwerindustrie* which backed the Government held over the head of Europe the threat of the Reich's bankruptcy and even of a revolution. Poincaré had the Ruhr occupied by French troops, who shot a nationalist agitator named Schlageter. French agents were at work creating a separatist movement in the Rhineland. Events, which I followed hourly, were hurrying onward at a dizzying pace. There was catastrophic inflation, speculation in currency; the rate of exchange of the dollar changed as often as twice a day and, in between telephone calls heralding the latest rise, the holders of the precious greenbacks issued by the Federal banks of America stripped the shops of all their goods... The central thoroughfares of the big towns could always be seen packed with people running along holding parcels. The Germans, of all people, actually rioted outside bakeries and grocers' shops; there was no rationing to inhibit them. Mobs loitered in the streets. How many trillions did it cost to stamp a letter? At the pay-desk of a Wertheim store I saw an old lady, with a black lace neckband, taking out of her handbag some hundred-mark notes dating from the previous year, the age of Walter Rathenau.

"But they are not worth anything now, *gnädige Frau* (honored lady)."

"What do you mean? I don't understand..." People guffawed at her. Walter Rathenau lay in his grave, his body torn to shreds: this notable Jew had dreamed of a new, intelligently organized German capitalism, and he had held discussions on the subject with Radek.

Not far from the Alexanderplatz and the Polizeipräsidium, a little shop was being looted, in the most orderly manner. Nobody is to take more than three tins of food, see! Proletarian discipline. In another place I saw a shoe store being looted. Two volunteers kept watch outside while people rapidly tried shoe after shoe for size; some, who had not found shoes to fit, came out scrupulously empty-handed... In the evening, in these same streets of the Alexanderplatz, I hear a strident whistle blast: at the given signal, shadows emerge from everywhere, gather in front of a Jewish shop, and suddenly there is shouting, crying, the sound of breaking glass. When the Schupo patrol comes along at the double, the noise stops, the shadows flee. Next morning,

it looks like a street after a riot: slashed eiderdowns have spilled their feathers everywhere. There are no more wealthy streets although the nightclubs are still attracting revelers—they'll stay open till the end of time. The *Schieber* (wheeler-dealers) wear fur-trimmed coats, and drive around in regal limousines. They know the true prices of shares, of commodities, of ships, of human creatures and of machines, of ministers and of senior police officials in mold-green uniforms. The people no longer know the price of anything. I pay three large brown loaves a week to an old engineer for the rent of his apartment. "And what if I can't find any bread to buy with that money, what will I do then?" he had asked. He's an ex-courtier of the King of Saxony, seventy-five years old. I can't tell him not to eat or to go and smash some shop windows...

The working-class women of Wedding, Neukolln, and Moabit had the gray complexions that I had first seen on convicts in the central jails, and subsequently among the inhabitants of the famished towns of the Russian Revolution. Few lights at the windows, dim groups in the streets. Each day brought its windfall of strikes, and every night the sinister silence echoed with revolver shots. The voice of the agitator would deliver a commentary in the street, surrounded by faces. The safe Social-Democrat, angry in a safe sort of way, the eager Communist, the patriotic member of the clandestine Leagues were all practically agreed: Versailles is a noose around the German nation's neck; woe unto France, woe unto Poland, woe unto capitalism! The Communists had an attractive scheme: industrial Germany and agricultural Russia could unite to save the world. Radek pushed through his "Schlageter tactic" of conciliation with the Nationalists. It's playing with fire—all right, let's play with fire! Where shall we begin? Our agitators told us, with a word that snapped out of their mouths: *Loschlagen!*—Strike out! The decision was taken: we strike. After careful and thorough preparations, we have only to choose the moment. Trotsky's talks to the Moscow Military School are published in several languages. Their subject: "*Can one lay down the date of a revolution in advance?*" Red Saxony and Thuringia, ruled by working-class governments (Communist and Social-Democratic) recruit two Red divisions. Arms arrive from Czechoslovakia; more are sold by the

Reichswehr, and the dollars to pay for them come from Russia. (The consequence is that the Reichswehr deliver a wagonload of carbines one nightfall and, once they have their hands on the brand-new dollars, inform the Schutzpolizei, who come at dawn to seize the truck...) The young militants have their orders to establish secret links with the troops; the railroad workers, to shunt away and camouflage the ammunitions wagons; the comrades in charge of transport, to look sharp, for God's sake! At night, outside the barred gates of the barracks, girls whose plaits are drawn into a topknot flirt with helmeted young men. "You'll bring out some grenades, won't you, dear?" *Liebeslied* and sweet romance!

Will the masses follow us? The Party makes up its mind only after the first big strikes in the Rhineland; it has held back the movement so as not to dissipate its forces. Are our forces gathering or weakening? Hunger has a habit of unnerving men. When the International has decided everything, what will be going on in the heads of the average Social-Democrat (who distrusts Communists) and the man in the street? From Moscow, where the Executive is in session, Boris Souvarine writes to me, "We are trying to put ourselves into Lenin's shoes..."

The Executive fixes the date of the uprising as 25 October, the anniversary of the seizure of power in Petrograd in 1917. At this moment the difference in dates between the Julian and Gregorian calendars is of small importance! I reply to Souvarine, and write to other contacts in Moscow, to the effect that unless the Party's initiative joins with the spontaneous movement of the masses, it is doomed beforehand. Every day I learn of stocks of arms being seized. The tense expectation in the working-class districts seems to be slackening strangely. The unemployed are passing, by swift stages, from an insurgent enthusiasm into weary resignation.

Voya Vuyovich arrives from Moscow: bulging forehead and gray eyes lighting up his young face. I knew of his history as a militant, which had begun during the retreat from Serbia. Voya became a Socialist through the fact that among this beaten rabble there were men who could still think calmly. Then came imprisonment in France, little committees, the International, illegal journeys, secret messages, and factional intrigue inside the old Socialist parties. Voya was one of

the hidden architects of the split in the Italian Socialist Party at its Leghorn Congress.

He tells me: "Our propaganda among occupation troops in the Ruhr has brought useful results. A police spy has been disposed of in Cologne..." Voya believes that, on the day, we shall win. "Everything is going to be much better than in Russia..." I hope you are right, Voya.

Other comrades are forming "mopping-up" squads with a view to the aftermath of the rising: these are to liquidate the leading staff of the counterrevolution. Our top activists are full of zest, but they are the only ones to be so. A few days before the uprising a militant from the military section of the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands gazed into my eyes when I put the question to him, and replied: "We shall make a good showing when we get defeated, but we shall be defeated all the same." We all feel like this: but meanwhile the Central Committee of the KPD is allotting the portfolios of a commissars' Cabinet to its members, and Koenen, with his ginger goatee and his schoolmaster's specs, explains to us on behalf of the Central Committee's Information Department that everything is going along wonderfully. Even on the day after our main stocks of arms in Berlin have been seized, he is still proving it. Chance is my principal informer, an excellent one too. I learn that a Party official has been arrested coming out of Willi Münzenberg's* house; his briefcase actually contained our arms accounts, intended for the eyes of the Comintern Executive. Thus the Party has been more or less disarmed in the capital. I also learn that the Government has decided in principle to dissolve it. I warn the members of the Central Committee of these facts, indirectly since it is now impossible for me to see them personally. They send a reply to the effect that this is indeed a current rumor in the streets, but that they know what's what; no one will dare to interfere! "Of course, we may lose, in which case..." They have already lost, but they still have no inkling that this is so.

Everything is set for the seizure of power on 25 October 1923! Red Saxony and Thuringia are to lead. In accordance with Comintern directives, Brandler, Heckert, and Bottcher have entered the Dresden Cabinet under the Social-Democrat Zeigner. The Communists see this

Government as the forerunner of insurrection; the Social-Democratics probably only as one more crisis Cabinet: everything will calm down, just like all the other times. On the 21st, a conference of Factory Committees meets at Chemnitz; this foreshadows the Congress of Workers' Councils that will proclaim the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Workers' Hundreds stand guard outside it: young lads, proud to carry the five-pointed star on their sports shirts, or old Spartakists who have lived through November 1918; the rising of January 1919; the murder, in public, in broad daylight, of Karl and Rosa; the dictatorship of the man of blood, Gustav Noske, that worthy Social-Democrat. These men are ready to do anything that they may be asked. I live with them, they ask me timid questions about Russia; the tall youngsters are studying the technique of street fighting.

While the Chemnitz conference is on, and Eberlein is seeing to secret preparations in Berlin, the Russian military experts review the strategic situation. They include Yuri Piatakov, who has experience of civil war in the Ukraine, and (I think) Lozovsky. This supply of arms would scarcely be enough even for fighting the campaigns around Kiev! There is nothing for it but to call off the insurrection. The lads return from Chemnitz, with long faces. Couriers leave with counterorders for every *Bezirk* (or region) in the country. Will we have the chance to recover our breath and make up our armaments? It would be madness to think so. There are few of us who realize the full extent of the defeat in the first moments that follow.

The counterorder has not reached Hamburg; there 300 Communists start the revolution. The town is frozen in silence and tense expectation; they go off, filled with a terrible enthusiasm, methodically organized. The police outposts fall one after the other, and sharpshooters take up their positions in the top windows over the main thoroughfares. Hamburg is taken, taken by the 300! The whole of Germany has not moved an inch, and neither for that matter has Hamburg itself. The housewives go out shopping, while the police venture out again, having regained their confidence, and start firing against invisible rebels who melt away as they approach. The workers, at home, await the outcome with impatience.

"Another putsch," say the Social-Democratics, "will you never

learn anything after all?" We answer back, "And you—what have you learnt?" The Left of the Party denounces the leadership, who are Rightists: Thalheimer the dialectician and Brandler the hump-backed bricklayer with malice in his eyes. The Left wonders if the Comintern Executive is at last going to recognize that "we are the real ones," the only revolutionaries, the only possible leadership for a German revolution. Ruth Fischer, Arkadi Maslow, Heinz Neumann,* and Arthur Rosenberg believe that their hour has come. I have met Rosenberg on a number of occasions at the *Rote Fahne*. This brilliant intellectual gives me a slight jolt by asking "Do you really think that the Russians want a German revolution?" He doubts if they do. Heinz Neumann, a pale, mocking young man, plays at conspiracy with the gusto of a romantic actor, but there is no acting in his courage. He carries false whiskers in his pocket; he has just escaped from a police station in the Rhineland; a house he is in is surrounded, and he gets away at the last minute; he purloins letters addressed to the comrades who are lodging him, members of the opposing tendency in the Party; he conducts, simultaneously, three or four different spheres of activity: one for the Party, one for the Left's Party-within-the-Party, and yet others more dangerous in nature, not forgetting the ladies... Twenty-five years old, he is a young rogue who argues like a cynic. He has an infant prodigy's capacity for absorbing knowledge, a sense of history, merciless views on his elders, and a love for a theoretical working class beside which the actual working class is only highly imperfect human material.

"There are no more real Bolsheviks in Germany. They are all putrid with moderation, wisdom, detachable collars, and respect for the Polizeipräsident—Do Not Break the Glass in the Street Lamps, and all that. The proletariat is respectability itself. We shall have to pass through Fascism before they get cured of all that claptrap." Heinz came several times, at dead of night, to air these opinions to me: he, with all the police of Germany after him, coming to see me, a man under observation, living just opposite the Lichterfelde barracks.

The Social-Democratic President, Ebert, deals with the tail end of the disturbances by granting full powers to General von Seeckt, whose ascetic face suddenly looms out from the newspapers. General Müller enters Dresden with a regiment and dismisses the Zeigner Government; there is no resistance. Every morning von Seeckt goes for a morning ride in the Tiergarten, followed by an aide-de-camp. On his route Heinz Neumann stations two workers, good marksmen and armed with revolvers. Twice these workers lose their nerve, and von Seeckt passes on...

On 9 November Adolf Hitler, the puny agitator from a tiny party that is stirring up trouble in Bavaria, opens his absurd coup in Munich. The result: one gunshot in the ceiling above the beer mugs, fourteen dead in the street, and the Führer-to-be flat on his stomach on the pavement and a very comfortable prison waiting for him. See now, the Left and the Right are both absolutely useless!

The Weimar Republic only survives the crisis of October to November 1923 through the weight of the masses' inertia. Its opponents, whether revolutionary or counterrevolutionary, have neither guts nor following. The bulk of the population is uninvolved, since it has no confidence in either of them. It will take years of deception before the unemployed will be seen either selling themselves for a crust to the Nazi Party or, like others, hopelessly following a confused ideal. Nothing could be done without the Social-Democratic masses, and these were divided into officials with a stake in the foundering social system and canny workers ridden by fear of revolution. As for revolution, the Russian Revolution, the only one that had succeeded, had suffered too much famine, waged too much terror, and strangled too much freedom in its early years. Trotsky is to explain the German defeat in terms of "the crisis of revolutionary leadership," but that crisis is itself an expression of two other crises: that of popular consciousness, and that of an already bureaucratized International.

There had been some talk of summoning Trotsky to Germany in the decisive hours, a suggestion which annoyed Zinoviev intensely:

why not he himself, for that matter? The Politburo had decided in principle to go as far as military intervention, if necessary, in support of the German rising, and divisions of troops were making ready. But now the ECCI, solicitous above all for its own prestige, condemns the "opportunism" and inefficiency of the two leaders of the KPD, Brandler and Thalheimer, who have been so incompetent in managing the German Revolution. But they did not dare move a finger without referring the matter to the Executive! But Brandler only learnt in the train that he had been made a Minister in Saxony! What's that you're saying? So you're trying to discredit the Executive, are you? Which comes first: the Communist International's reputation? Or your version of the truth, and the moral interests of individuals?

Scapegoats had to be found. Out of defeat came the lying, the suppression, the demoralizing discipline that ruins consciences. Nobody talked about the basic fault. The whole Party lived on the involuntary bluff of functionaries whose first concern was not to contradict their superiors. Misinformation was generated at the base through the personal interest of the poor wretch who, simply to keep his job, assured the *Bezirk* or Central Committee organizer that, yes, he had his fifty men available and that the fifty Mausers had been bought—when in fact he had ten men and was searching in vain to find Mausers for sale. Misinformation ascended stage by stage, through the whole hierarchy of secretaries, so that, at the end of it all, the delegate from the Central Committee of the KPD could tell the President of the International, "We are prepared," when nothing was prepared and everybody in the Party knew it was so, except those who drew up the confidential reports. Now, the International was in fully blown crisis. We could sense that this, in turn, heralded the crisis of the Russian Revolution. What would the Soviet Republic do, without gold, without funds, and with its pathetic industry, faced with this disaster?

On the very morning of the proclamation of von Seeckt's dictatorship, I took the express for Prague, with my wife and four-year-old son. We had lived through critical days, working practically without money, without an identity to fall back on, and packed off in indecent haste at the last minute by the Soviet Embassy, which had no intention of compromising itself by assisting illegal workers. In the carriage

some travelers asked my son, whose only fluent language was German, what he was going to do when he grew up, and he answered in a flash: "*Krieg gegen die Franzosen!*" (War against the French!)

Prague was an oasis of urbane prosperity. Under its sober President Masaryk, it was enjoying affluence and liberty, the fruits of victory. I spent my time admiring the old streets, the clear waters of the Vltava, the lifelike statues of the Charles Bridge, the greenery, and the noble towers of the Hradschin in the distance. I found it a strange and troubling fact that nothing more than a frontier, drawn on a map and watched over by a few peaceful border guards, could mark such a difference in conditions in two countries of such closeness of culture, both so much a part of Europe. Vienna was recovering painfully from its inflationary crisis: Austria, in the knowledge that it could not live behind its meager frontiers, was playing for time, building workers' flats, and enjoying sweet music in every café down to the smallest. I arrived with a diplomatic passport, which restored my identity with, however, some embarrassment to me, since I was not officially listed.

Andrés Nin, the secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions, who was passing through Vienna with Lozovsky, told me that Lenin was dying. Lenin still seemed to be completely conscious, but had no power to express himself or do any work. He would manage to stutter out a few words with difficulty; the heading of *Pravda* was spelt out to him letter by letter. Sometimes his eyes were heavy with a voiceless tribulation. Once, when he had felt better, he had wished to see the Kremlin again, and his worktable and telephones; he was taken to them.

"You can see him, leaning on Nadezhda Konstantinovna [Krupskaya] and Nikolai Ivanovich [Bukharin], dragging his feet weakly across his study, gazing, terrified in case he will no longer understand it, at the map on the wall, taking pencils between his fingers to make a rough signature, all like a dreamer, like a despairing old man in his second childhood. Bukharin often visits him in his country house, the one that belongs to Gorky; Bukharin makes merry in his company,

and then hides behind a bush looking at him with tear-dimmed eyes... It's definitely the end, my friend."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards, there's going to be a fight. The unity of the Party nowadays depends upon that shadow of a man, no more than that."

I remembered what Lenin had said to Dr. Goldenberg, an Old Bolshevik who lived in Berlin and was summoned urgently by Lenin for a consultation at the beginning of his illness: "We have demolished quite a lot! For that, certainly, we have been competent enough!" I was traveling on a January day in 1924. The train bumped out of tunnels into vast landscapes on a mountain glittering with snow, where somber armies of firs made a sudden descent. In this compartment full of fat, stodgy men, someone opened a newspaper and I saw: *Death of Lenin*. Then these men talked about the death, showing that they felt someone unique and very great had passed. I looked at their faces, folk from another world, Austrian petit bourgeois closed to all new ideas, lamenting the death of a revolutionary—and Lenin was there, too, before my eyes, his hands open in the familiar gesture of demonstration, hunching a little towards the audience, marshaling the historical evidence, with his great firm forehead and the smile of a man who was sure of the truth, sure of himself. Together with a few others, this man had endowed an immense movement of faltering masses with a political consciousness that was supremely clear and resolute. Even when favorable social conditions are granted, such a human achievement is rare, unique, irreplaceable at the moment of its happening. Without it, the minds of those who marched would have been several degrees dimmer, the chances of chaos, and of defeat amid chaos, immeasurably greater; for a degree of consciousness, once lost, can never be measured.

Events continued to overwhelm us. Even where they took place at a distance I find it hard to separate them from my personal memories. All we lived for was activity integrated into history; we were interchangeable; we could immediately see the repercussions of affairs in Russia upon affairs in Germany and the Balkans; we felt linked with our comrades who, in pursuit of the same ends as we, perished or else scored some success at the other end of Europe. None of us had, in the

bourgeois sense of the word, any personal existence: we changed our names, our postings, and our work at the Party's need; we had just enough to live on without real material discomfort, and we were not interested in making money, or following a career, or producing a literary heritage, or leaving a name behind us; we were interested solely in the difficult business of reaching Socialism. When I say *we*, I have in mind the typical international or Russian militant comrade. Bukharin had recently defined the party as the "iron cohort"; one of us compared it to the Jesuits' order founded by a saint who was also a soldier, a politician, an organizer, and above all a man of intelligence. The Jesuits were able to combine faith with a supple and determined materialist understanding of life; they were able to serve the Church with an absolute detachment from vanities and personal interests... "We are the red Jesuits, in the best sense of the term." "Yes, but that's quite risky for us," I replied. "Behind us stands a State that is not at all incorruptible. But we do constitute a great force because we are actualizing a new mode of consciousness and of living."

At 5:15 a.m. on 1 December 1924, 227 Estonian Communists, following the orders of the ECCI, attacked the public buildings of Tallinn with the objective of seizing power. By 9:00 a.m., they were being slaughtered in all corners of the small capital. By noon, nothing was left of their ardor but splashes of blood on the little round cobbles. Yan Tomp was shot.

How could Zinoviev have initiated this imbecile adventure? The man terrified us. He refused to acknowledge the German defeat. In his eyes the rising had been only delayed and the KPD was still marching to power. The riots in Cracow were enough for him to announce revolution in Poland. I felt that he was obsessed by the error in his otherwise sensible judgment, which had led him in 1917 to oppose the incipient Bolshevik revolution; in consequence, he had now swung into an authoritarian and exaggerated revolutionary optimism. "Zinoviev," we used to say, "is Lenin's biggest mistake."

In September 1924 we learnt that a rebellion had just been crushed in Soviet Georgia. The comrades who came from Russia spoke of it, in their confidential discussions, with extreme bitterness. "Collapse of

our agrarian policy... The whole Georgian Party, with Mdivani at their head, is in opposition to the Central Committee, and the whole country is in opposition to the Party..."

Later we heard of the massacre, supervised by Sergo Ordzhonikidze, a former inmate of Schlüsselburg, an honest and scrupulous man tormented by recurrent crises of conscience. I learnt of the background to the tragedy: a people in ferment, their national pride outraged, provocation organized by the Cheka to unmask rebellious tendencies and then liquidate them; the imprisoned members of the Menshevik Central Committee of Georgia, receiving information of the preparation for the revolt, beg to be released for a few days so that they can avert irreparable disaster, even offering to take poison before they set out; they are kept inside, powerless, and later shot... The political problem of the Caucasus was this: could Red Russia, as a great power, agree that two little countries like Georgia and Azerbaijan, prone to hostile influences and bound to become a hunting ground for foreign powers, should keep their petroleum, manganese, and strategic roads all to themselves?

In Vienna we breathe the turbulent air of the Balkans. Of events there we catch only fragmentary glimpses, but these take in several vistas: propaganda, activity, whether openly acknowledged or disavowed, and secret intrigue. Bulgaria was still pregnant with revolution, despite all its previous miscarriages. In a public meeting at the Kremlin, I had heard Kolarov, an impressive deputy, and the thin Kabakchiev, bearded up to his very eyes, speaking proudly of their Party, the only Socialist Party in Europe that was, like the Bolsheviks, intransigently loyal to principle. They called themselves *Tesnyaki*, the Narrows, by contrast with the broad, flabby opportunists of whatever country. They remarked that they would have already seized power if the Executive had not been dubious about the international complications; it was necessary to wait and allow Stambulisky's Peasant Party to exhaust itself and lose its credit with the rural masses, who would then turn to us... While they were waiting, Professor Tsankov, supported by a military conspiracy, carried out his coup, in June 1923. Stambulisky, the huge frizzy-haired giant, was surprised at his country house, and straddled like a beast by brutes who murdered him

with all the cruelty of primitive imagination. The powerful Communist Party, under Kolarov, Kabakchiev, and Dimitrov, observed a neutrality which they justified in terms of the most straitlaced doctrinal intransigence: "It is not for a working-class party to support the rural petty bourgeoisie against the reactionary big bourgeoisie..." When the Party was persecuted immediately afterwards, its leaders acknowledged their mistake in Moscow and promised to set it right. It was too late. In September, the Communists took to arms, with poor support from an enfeebled and helpless peasantry. They fought, and were scattered; the noise of these relatively minor fusillades was lost in the great avalanche-roar of the advancing German Revolution...

I was in Vienna when, at the beginning of April 1925, Tsar Boris, whom we dubbed "the Butcher of the Bulgars," narrowly missed assassination; on 15 April General Kosta Georgiev fell to the bullets of a terrorist. On the 17th, the Government was assembled together for his funeral at the Cathedral of the Seven Saints in Sofia, when an explosive device shattered one of the domes. One hundred and twenty dead were unearthed from the rubble, including three deputies, thirteen generals, eight colonels, and eight high officials. By a singular chance the Government and the royal family were unscathed. The explosion had been organized by officers from the military section of the Communist Party, who were acting perhaps on their own behalf—for the Party was ravaged by dissension—or else in accordance with secret instructions. It surprised the Communists themselves, who were at once assaulted, fired on, tortured, and murdered by the troops and police. Shablin, a handsome, smiling man whom I had known in Russia, was (it seems) burnt alive in a furnace. The two men responsible for the explosion, Yankov and Minkov, were killed resisting arrest. In May, in front of fifty thousand inhabitants of Sofia, three Communists were hanged, one of who, Marko Fridman, had defended the ideas and record of the Party every inch of the way before his judges.[1] A French Communist, Eugène Léger, tried and

1. This is not strictly accurate. Before the end of the trial Fridman broke down and gave evidence on the internal organization of the Communist Party and its military section.

condemned with these men, was subsequently released in obscure circumstances and took refuge in Moscow, where he disappeared. I was to discover later that he had spent a long period in the secret Isolator at Yaroslavl, whence he was transferred, now insane, to an asylum.

Much of what I saw and learnt cast such tragedies in an unpleasant light. A whole group of fighters from our Civil War, now powerful in the secret services, was advocating "diversions in enemy territory," especially in Poland because a Polish attack against Russia was considered likely. At the same time, the authoritarian regime within the party fostered angry or desperate responses. Furthermore, the numerous Macedonian revolutionaries in Vienna, divided among themselves and corrupted by at least three governments (Russian, Bulgarian, and Italian), were people who would stop at nothing. Following each attack in Sofia, several little gangs would be demanding rewards from various secret services attached to three different embassies.

On the day the three were executed in Sofia, I happened to be in Carinthia, by Lake Wörthersee, a mirror of blue at the feet of the Karawank Mountains that separate Austria from Yugoslavia. In the distance, the astonishing landscapes of the high slopes were painted an aerial green. Atrocious contrast. Shortly after, the Soviet military attaché in Vienna, Iaroslavsky, turned traitor—so we were told. I had noticed him at the embassy. I knew that he had fought a great deal, that he drank, that he was deeply depressed by the goings-on in the Balkans. He left a brief farewell message on the table. Somebody tracked him down, took him out to dinner with some women, put something in his glass. This somebody then drew a camera from his pocket and took a clear picture of the dead man, which a comrade from the embassy showed me with a bitter smile. The GPU declared that Iaroslavsky had been in contact with the British Intelligence Service.

I became interested in the Balkan Federation movement. The conception was noble: no other remedy was appropriate to the division of the small kindred peoples of the peninsula into feeble states, destined to be destroyed sooner or later through their mutual laceration. The doctor, a big white-haired Bulgarian, scholarly and Parisified, would arrange appointments with me in discreet little local cafés. A taxi, and then the tram; we would head out to the vineyards, between Florids-

dorf and Mödling. There we would meet a young stranger in an outsize overcoat, whom I immediately classified as a bodyguard; I thought I could see the enormous Browning revolver, the favorite weapon of Macedonians (who do not trust small bullets), bulging through his coat pocket. The overcoat man, all smiles, hurried me along urgently: the tram again, and then we came to a village full of charming taverns, and after that to a villa, adorned with flowers like its neighbors, in which lived the last surviving leader of the Communist-influenced *La Fédération Balkanique*, a former Member of the Ottoman Parliament. What, has there been an Ottoman Parliament? Oh yes, convened by Abdul Hamid, and on the day of its opening, bombs explode . . . V——[2] rarely goes out now. Murder lies in wait for him at every street corner, and at night trusted men stand watch in the garden of his villa. In this very city his predecessor, Todor Panitza, was recently killed while watching a performance in a theater. A short while before that, Panitza's predecessor, Peter Chaulev, had discovered that he was being tailed in these streets and took the train to Milan. In Milan he was murdered. And a short while before that, the old leader of IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization), Todor Aleksandrov, had been killed at the end of a conference in the mountains, in which he had advocated cooperation with the Communists. I had drafted the three obituaries for the press.

Around the great conception of the Balkan Federation there swarmed hordes of secret agents, impresarios of irredentism, peddlers of the influential word, night-walking politicians engaged in six intrigues at a time—and all these smart gentlemen, with their over-gaudy neckties, sought to harness the unbridled energy of the *Comitajis* and sell it to and fro to any buyer. There was the Italian wing, the Bulgarian wing, the Yugoslav wing, two Greek tendencies, one monarchist and one republican, ideologies, personal cliques, and vendettas. We knew the cafés in which the revolvers of any given group lay in wait, watched from the café opposite by those of another. *La Fédération Balkanique* was a focus for certain revolutionary romantics who were the survivors of other tragedies. Among them I met the young Serbs of recent

2. V—— is Dimitar Vlahov.*

memory, friends and disciples of Vladimir Gaćinović, the Bakuninist and nationalist, who died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty after founding the group which was, on 28 June 1914, to carry out the assassination at Sarajevo. They cherished the memory of Gavrilo Princip* and of the teacher Ilić.* They declared that their leader, Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević*—alias "Apis," in underground circles—had, before initiating the action, been assured of support from Russia; this had been formally promised by Artamonov, the Russian Imperial military attaché in Belgrade, who had been informed of the project. I published these allegations in *Clarté* (in Paris), and heard them confirmed by a former colleague of Dimitrijević, Colonel Božin Simić, and also, more reticently, by a former Serbian Ambassador, M. Bogićević. As a consequence of this revelation, some Yugoslav friends advised me not to go too near the Yugoslav border in the course of my trips to the Wörthersee, and on no account to enter Yugoslavia; there were, they told me, certain highly confidential instructions of which I was the subject. These survivors of the Serb conspiracies against the Habsburg monarchy were shortly to join the Communist Party. In 1938 I found their names in a Communist newspaper that published the news of their expulsion. They disappeared in Russia.

Despite all these setbacks and the general atmosphere, the Russians still kept their plain integrity and abundant optimism. Men whose usefulness had been exhausted habitually ended by living in Soviet missions abroad, there to observe the decay of the bourgeois world. They were given these sinecures to keep them quiet. They included seasoned veterans of the persecution in the old days, former Marxist exiles, and the ex-managers of those first Soviet institutions that had succeeded against everyone's expectation. Some of them were now only chatterers, nursing strained hearts and content to smoke good cigars and be driven out to the Cobenzl Restaurant. An obsequious riffraff fussed about them, and observing their eccentricities, remarked complacently to themselves: "That's what they are, these great revolutionaries, when you see them close up." Of some of these men I will say nothing. But I wish to set down at this point a few character sketches of worthy men, to whom my memory returns with affection. They typify a vanished generation.

I again met Adolf Abramovich Joffe,* a little aged since I last saw him in Petrograd in the desperate days of resistance. He now reminded one of a wise physician, almost affluent in his appearance and almost comical in his gravity, who had been summoned to the bedside of a dying patient. He was now back from China and Japan, having won Sun Yat-sen for the cause of Soviet friendship. A sick man, and in disgrace because of the boldness of his views, he was accredited by the Soviet Union to the Austrian Republic, in other words to the Chancellor, Cardinal Seipel. He was opposed to all adventures. He told me that a Yugoslav officers' league had made him an offer to install, forcibly, a left-wing government in Belgrade. Stjepan Radić's Croat Peasant Party would give it support... (We often talked of Stjepan Radić, who was worth far more than any Balkan politician; he was to be murdered not long afterwards in front of the whole Yugoslav Parliament.) Joffe, with his bearded Assyrian face, powerful lips, and eyes that disconcerted the newcomer, so severe was their squint, gave a vivid pout of disdain: "They imagine that revolutions are made like that. No, thank you!" They were all for sale, coups d'état, dictatorships, republican leanings, pro-Soviet sympathies, shady dealings, what you like. A man like Joffe knew, better than anyone, the colossal frontier that separates revolutionary action from dubious adventurism. Others preferred not to know: these sponsored the establishment in Albania of a pro-Soviet Left Government under Monsignor Fan Noli. Ahmet Zogu's putsch followed it, and Albania passed into the Italian sphere of influence.[3]

This dark frontier land was often skirted, as a matter of duty, by Dr. Goldstein, the Embassy Secretary. "There are," he would explain, "gray zones in which the traditional revolutionary techniques are complicated by the fact that we have gained money and power. Henceforth, we are subject to sordid seductions, doomed to inducing greed in our wake. When people think they have conquered money, they are usually conquered and deformed by it, instead. We would like to believe the government of the proletariat immune to this evil: may we

3. The coup was in June 1924. Zogu soon afterwards assumed the royal title of King Zog.

not be wrong!" A specialist in Balkan affairs, Goldstein was tall, thin, and artful; a man of great modesty, he was quite straightforwardly a Socialist of the old breed, who carried out the worst possible directives in such a way as to do the least possible damage. Killer squads from Sofia lay in wait for him all around the Schwartzenbergplatz. Fortunately their assignment was complicated by the fact that they had been told to liquidate him without causing any scandal. He showed me some photographs that had been taken, without my knowledge, of the contents of my desk drawer: "I advise you to sack your maidservant. Some of the backroom chaps from the Whites have been paying visits to your papers; however, we have a man planted among them..."

Old Kozlovsky, whose sympathetic face befitted his past as a St. Petersburg lawyer, had been our first People's Commissar of Justice. His function then was to combat excesses. He related to me how the Cheka had drawn up a document defining who was a suspect: "*Social origins*: aristocratic or bourgeois, *Education*: University..." Kozlovsky took the sheet and went to knock on Lenin's door: "Tell me, Vladimir Ilyich, surely this also includes us two, doesn't it?" "The appalling imbeciles!" said Lenin. A provincial Cheka proposed in 1918 to bring back torture to make foreign spies talk. Kamenev and Kozlovsky were enraged at the idea, which received short shrift.

R——'s supposed job was selling oil for the Soviet Naphtha Production Syndicate. "Oil? I've never seen any in my life except in lamps and I have no desire to see any..." Except for Russian, the only language he spoke was the Turkish of Central Asia. The Red Star of Bukhara shone on his jacket. Thickset, dark skinned, shaved head, slanting eyes, and the profile of a bird of prey, he retained the allure of an Oriental horseman. In exile for having voted the wrong way at a Moscow Party meeting, that is to say for the democratization of the Party demanded by Preobrazhensky and Trotsky. "Either we revive, or the revolution will drown," he would say. I can still see his face etched with sorrow or grim with suppressed fury when the Moscow papers carried whole pages of vile polemic against Trotsky. Already and unbelievably, the official monopoly of the printed word was debasing minds: the arguments were as watertight as a sieve, the writing viscous, the

irony crude and poor, naked truth in the hands of oafs . . . As yet I don't dare think that it is the end of the Party, the end of idealism, but at this depth of intellectual degradation—of oppression, even—it is impossible to go on living. But when somebody else tells me the same thing, I rebel; Souvarine sends me a letter full of vitriol and I protest, I am almost ready to cry treason. So we will remain, clinging to the very last hopes, some for ten years or more, many till death—their own death in the form of a bullet in the brain, by order of the Politburo. But this is all in the murky and quite unimaginable future. Trotsky is still president of the Supreme War Council, and writes with a dazzling pen. We love the Party and cannot imagine life outside it. We have faith in its future as much as in ourselves, sure in ourselves that we shall never betray it. R—— won the Red Star of Bukhara riding on the sands of Turkestan. He told me, over a coffee in Graben, that at the time of typhus and of beheadings, Trotsky had caught up with a rebellious cavalry regiment, had his car driven in amongst the drawn sabers, and had addressed this crowd of eighteenth-century Eurasian faces, by turns implacably authoritarian, human, skillful—and the curved blades returned to their scabbards and the horsemen of the steppes cried, "Hurray! Long live the world revolution!" "I can't tell you how relieved I was . . ." (In 1927 R—— was adviser to Chiang Kai-shek during the victorious Kuomintang campaign in the north; he was the architect of what became a legendary victory in China. He disappeared during the Purges.)

Yuri Kotziubinsky* was a man with whom I could speak frankly of everything. His nimble life had survived only by some chance or miracle. He had been waiting in a Kiev cellar for his turn to go against the wall, when the Reds captured the town, so quickly that the Whites had no time to dispatch the last prisoners. He escaped from encircled townships, joining Piatakov and the last fighters for the Soviets who also functioned as the Government of the Ukraine. The country was subdued village by village; what was captured in the morning was often lost by nightfall. In those parts the names of the heroes of 1918 were Evgenia Bosch, Yuri Kotziubinsky, and Yuri Piatakov. He was a tall, handsome man with a thin line of beard around his jowl, an aquiline profile, and a head in the harmonious proportions of the young humanists of long ago, except that it was much more solidly stocked

inside. Kotziubinsky was too popular among the working class of Kharkov, and so was exiled to the world of diplomacy. He sympathized with the most radical Oppositionist group, that of the "Democratic Centralists": Sapronov,* Vladimir Smirnov* in the Ukraine, and Drobnis (the one shot in 1937). We would clamber up the steep slopes of the Leopoldsberg and there gaze out on the blue band of the Danube and discuss the problems of the Party. I see him now, laughing into the wind, his silk blouse, with a cord for its belt, billowing away. (From Vienna he went on to be Consul General at Warsaw; he was shot without trial in 1937.)

Like Yuri Kotziubinsky, N—— usually wore only a Russian blouse under his jacket, but N—— only possessed one old gray suit, and had no idea that it was possible to wear anything else. Young, or rather ageless, without any official job in the Legation, without money (which he despised), known history, or personal life, very Jewish, and childlike in his gaze, N—— was a courageous conspirator. His corner of the Embassy was confined to strictly secret duties; it was full of vials, chemical reactives, and inks, photographic apparatus, and codes. I wondered if he had forgotten his real name as a result of changing his nationality and identity so many times. (But then, what is one's "real" name?) He had bad memories of a spell in prison in France, except for one May Day, when in the penitentiary he had stood up in the middle of the workshop and read out in his clumsy French a speech prepared with considerable effort: "Comrades prisoners! Today is International Workers' Day..." The prisoners were astonished and thought he had gone off his head; the guards seized him. He was in solitary while the pickpockets, burglars, drug dealers, pimps, and crooked lawyers were still laughing behind his back: Did you see that moron? In the punishment cell, he was proud to have demonstrated. We talked passionately of our sick Party: sick, but what else is there in the world?

(Years went by. I had just come out of a Soviet prison when N—— called on me in Leningrad. "Where have you come from, you old ghost?" "From Shanghai." Shanghai in 1928 was no sinecure. N—— had reorganized the trade unions there after the 1927 massacre. There he had met men more stoical, more cunning, more nameless than himself. "The anarchists, too," he remarked to me, "they're wonderful—

but what an ideology! Fit for twelve-year-old kids!" He had just learned, on his arrival back in Moscow, of the execution of Yakov Blumkin; he had sought out the comrades in the firing squad to discover how our mutual friend had passed his last moments. He came to me with the news.)

Angelica Balabanova, the first Secretary of the Comintern Executive, whose moral objections had often annoyed Lenin and Zinoviev, had just been expelled from the Third International. She lived now sometimes in Vienna, sometimes in its outskirts, carting her possessions, those of the eternal poor student, from one furnished room to another: the spirit stove for tea, the small pan for omelettes, and three cups for her guests, together with the huge picture of Felippo Turati,* the manly, glowing portrait of Matteotti,* files of *Avanti!*, the correspondence of the Italian Maximalist Party, and notebooks full of poems. Small, dark, and beginning to age, Angelica still led her eager militant's life which, with its romantic fire, was about three-quarters of a century too late. She should have had Mazzinians and Carbonari around her, burning with zeal to fight for the Universal Republic! After a life spent in the company of politicians like Lazzari and Serrati, in whom a little of this fire still lingered, decently displayed in their Parliamentary tactics, Angelica had rushed to the service of the Russian Revolution (suffering in the process a severe battering from a reactionary mob in Switzerland), and lived in close contact with that world government of Marxism which went by the name of the Executive of the Communist International.

It was no longer the atmosphere of Zimmerwald! Seats in the different Commissions were adroitly packed, and couriers carrying diamonds were sent to the fraternal parties abroad (couriers and diamonds both disappearing); other emissaries were sent to arrange the expulsion of men who were still being called "dear comrade." Doubtless this was no more than the backstage intrigue unavoidable in any large organization, though it was dignified by the magnitude of events and even justified by the need to weed out the real fighters from the old speechmakers who lived in comfort knowing that nothing they said was likely to entail any action. Revolutionary politics, when conducted with foresight and courage, requires at certain decisive times

the qualities of a good surgeon, for there is no character in this world more humane and honest than that of the good surgeon, even though he works on living flesh, amid pain and blood. Angelica rebelled both against the political surgery that led to the unceremonious removal of the reformist leaders who were inclined to torpedo any offensive tactic, and against Zinoviev's sordid little tricks of political bonesetting. She was quick to detect the first symptoms of that moral sickness which after the passing of some fifteen years was to bring on the death of Bolshevism. Georg Lukács,* the author of *History and Class Consciousness*, once remarked to me: "Marxists know that dirty little tricks can be performed with impunity when great deeds are being achieved; the error of some comrades is to suppose that one can produce great results simply through the performance of dirty little tricks . . ."

Angelica gave me coffee on her windowsill and sent me her friendly criticisms for the benefit of our official publications. I recalled the days of the famine in Petrograd, when, as a present for the birth of our son, she had sent us an orange and a bar of chocolate, delicacies from another world, imported through the diplomatic bag. In her hands lay

Vienna 1925, Serge, Gramsci, Vlady held by Lucien Laurat, Liuba

great kindness, and in her eyes a fortifying passion. I reflected that several times she had narrowly missed the death of a Rosa Luxemburg.

Antonio Gramsci* was living in Vienna, an industrious and Bohe-

mian exile, late to bed and late to rise, working with the illegal Committee of the Italian Communist Party. His head was heavy, his brow high and broad, his lips thin; the whole was carried on a puny, square-shouldered, weak-chested, humpbacked body. There was grace in the movement of his fine, lanky hands. Gramsci fitted awkwardly into the humdrum of day-to-day existence, losing his way at night in familiar streets, taking the wrong train, indifferent to the comfort of his lodgings and the quality of his meals—but, intellectually, he was absolutely alive. Trained intuitively in the dialectic, quick to uncover falsehood and transfix it with the sting of irony, he viewed the world with an exceptional clarity. Once, we consulted together about the quarter-million workers who had been admitted at one stroke into the Russian Communist Party, on the day after Lenin's death. How much were these proletarians worth, if they had had to wait for the death of Vladimir Ilyich before coming to the Party?

After the example of Matteotti, like him a Deputy, like him living among menaces, a frail invalid held in both detestation and respect by Mussolini, Gramsci had remained in Rome to carry on the struggle. He was fond of telling stories about his wretched childhood: how he had failed his entry to the priesthood, for which his family had marked him out. With his short bursts of sardonic laughter he exposed certain leading figures of Fascism with whom he was closely acquainted. When the crisis in Russia began to worsen, Gramsci did not want to be broken in the process, so he had himself sent back to Italy by his Party: he, who was identifiable at the first glance because of his deformity and his great forehead. He was imprisoned in June 1928, together with Umberto Terracini and some others, and a Fascist jail kept him outside the operation of those factional struggles whose consequence nearly everywhere was the elimination of the militants of his generation. Our years of darkness were his years of stubborn resistance. (Twelve years later, in 1937, when I emerged from my period of deportation in Russia and arrived in Paris, I was following a Popular Front demonstration when someone pushed a Communist pamphlet into my hand: it contained a picture of Antonio Gramsci, who had died on 27 April of that year in an Italian prison hospital, after eight years of captivity.)

The Hungarian emigration was deeply split. To the opposition

within his Party, Béla Kun was a remarkably odious figure. He was the incarnation of intellectual inadequacy, uncertainty of will, and authoritarian corruption. Several of his opponents were starving to death in Vienna. Of these, I held Georg Lukács in greatest esteem; indeed, I owe him a great deal. A former university teacher in Budapest, and then commissar to a Red division in the front line, Lukács was a philosopher steeped in the works of Hegel, Marx, and Freud, and possessing a free-ranging and rigorous mind. He was engaged in writing a number of outstanding books that were never to see the light of day. In him I saw a first-class brain that could have endowed Communism with a true intellectual greatness if it had developed as a social movement instead of degenerating into a movement in solidarity with an authoritarian power. Lukács's thinking led him to a totalitarian vision of Marxism within which he united all aspects of human life; his theory of the Party could be taken as either superb or disastrous, depending on the circumstances. For example, he considered that since history could not be divorced from politics, it should be written by historians in the service of the Central Committee.

One day we were discussing the problem of whether or not revolutionaries who had been condemned to death should commit suicide; this arose from the execution in 1919 at Budapest of Otto Korvin, who had been in charge of the Hungarian Cheka, and whose hanging afforded a choice spectacle for "society" folk. "I thought of suicide," said Lukács, "in the hours when I was expecting to be arrested and hanged with him. I came to the conclusion that I had no right to it: a member of the Central Committee must set the example." (I was to meet Georg Lukács and his wife later, in 1928 or 1929, in a Moscow street. He was then working at the Marx-Engels Institute; his books were being suppressed, and he lived bravely in the general fear. Although he was fairly well-disposed towards me, he did not care to shake my hand in a public place, since I was expelled and a known Oppositionist. He enjoyed a physical survival, and wrote short, spiritless articles in Comintern journals.[4])

4. Serge is mistaken about the date and could only have met Lukács in Moscow in 1930–31.

Eugene Landler was nearing fifty; paunchy, prominent nose, the head of a beer drinker, broad smile and wily look, this former railway worker, union organizer, leader of big strikes turned out to be, at the crucial moment of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the generalissimo of a trade union army who managed to carry off a famous victory which was also comical. He was on his way to the front line when he met a general returning from there in a sidecar. He stopped him in the road to hear his report: "The situation is hopeless! I've ordered a retreat." The big railwayman would hear no more: he slapped the general with the back of his hand, hauled him out of the sidecar, rushed to the front line, and restored the situation by mobilizing the worker population of the abandoned city, arming them with old shotguns and lead slugs cast there on the spot in the old-fashioned way. This musketry made an infernal din whereas the Czechs had been expecting to meet no resistance—and it put them to flight! Lander's humor bordered between the outrageous and common sense. He pointed out that there is still a lot that militants can do when officers reckon that in accordance with the laws of the art of war a situation is lost. "Luckily, I had no clue about the rules of their art!" Pushed aside, Landler managed to get by. He died in peace, in exile, in 1928.

I was present, in my nonexistent capacity as a representative of the Soviet press, at a Romanian-Soviet peace conference. The head of the Soviet delegation was Leonid Serebriakov, a former metalworker and inhabitant of Imperial prisons, a soldier for the Revolution in Siberia and all over Russia, organizer of the Soviet Railwaymen's Union, reorganizer of our railways. A prominent figure in the democratic Opposition in the Party, he was, at the age of thirty-four, marked out by virtue of his moral authority, talents, and past as one of the future leaders of the Soviet State. He was sent shortly afterwards to the United States where he made a reputation as a great Socialist administrator in the world of business. Stout, vigorous in manner, fair-haired, with a full, round face and an aggressive little mustache, he faced good-humoredly an elderly Romanian diplomat of the very oldest school, who measured his every word, quibbled, received us very ceremoniously in the all-white lounge of a smart hotel, and declared at every instance that he would have to consult his government. This

accomplished, he invited us to dinner. "What a fossil!" we thought. However, the fossil was surrounded by young secretaries who looked just like gangster socialites, spoke perfect Russian, and were extremely interested in the command structure of the Red Army. "Look, just between us," one of them asked me over cognac, "what do your people think is the solution to the Bessarabian question?" "They think that it should be entrusted to Frunze by giving him two divisions of cavalry..." This threw a chill on things. A Romanian senator, Mr. Draghiecescou, very likable and, naturally, an ex-libertarian, also offered me dinner only to propose in the effusive talk that follows a fine meal, "Leave us Bessarabia, dear friend! I assure you that ethnically, historically, etc." I guided the conversation back to the progress of the Red Army in rearming... The negotiations failed completely. Ouf! (Leonid Serebriakov was to be shot in 1937.)

We had only very little contact with the Austrian Social-Democrats. The tiny Communist Party, which was divided into two warring factions (Toman versus Frey), each numbering about 100 militants, plastered the walls of Vienna periodically with posters demanding the arming of the workers and the dictatorship of the proletariat. But meanwhile, Austrian Social-Democracy continued in its great career, apparently without any suspicion that it was living out its last years. (Actually it did suspect this, but was cutting a fine figure of bravery, and even nonchalance, in the face of unfavorable odds.) Austro-Marxism organized and influenced more than a million proletarians; it was master of Vienna, where it was evolving a municipal Socialism rich in achievement; it could mobilize, in a few hours, fifty thousand *Schutzbundler* on the Ring, uniformed in sports tunics and (as everyone knew) tolerably well armed; it was led by the most able theoreticians in the working-class world; and yet, two or three times in ten years, through its sobriety, prudence, and bourgeois moderation, it failed its destiny.

If only... If only a Red Austria had joined with the Hungarian Soviets, would not troubled Bohemia, and then Germany, have followed their example? Revolution was maturing in Italy during this same period. But perhaps it was already too late. If only, after 1918... If only the commission on the nationalization of the main industries, estab-

lished by the Socialist Government, had not been such a farce! If only the Social-Democrats of Austria had had a little of the impassioned energy of the Bolsheviks of Russia! All they ever did was to sip sweet white wine in the operetta-land of the Blue Danube, while the Bolsheviks were tramping in chains along Siberian highways. Its opportunities lost, its hours of daring past, little Austria found herself jammed in the middle of the expanding counterrevolutions of Hungary, Italy, and Germany. At home, Socialist Vienna found itself menaced by the countryside and the Catholic bourgeoisie. Prince Starhemberg was recruiting his peasant bands against it. I attended meetings of Social-Democratic Party activists: they were middle-aged men, few of them at all fit, who drank their beer as they listened to the speakers. The Schutzbund would march past the Town Hall with thirty thousand bicycles garlanded with flowers! Otto Bauer,* who was greeted on all sides by affectionate glances, watched the parade of this working-class force, so self-confident, so worthy of a glorious future. If only it had been a matter of just being worthy! I could see clearly the enormous weakness of these men and above all of their leaders: it doubtless came from being, by culture and consciousness, the best Europeans of the time, the most attached to nineteenth-century democracy, the most distant from inhuman violence. I saw them, in the Taborstrasse, the day after some anti-Semitic attacks, angrily chasing swastika-wearing thugs and fops from street corner to street corner. I saw the mounted police gently charging the crowds of demonstrators around the Palace of Justice . . . (Fourteen years later, in Paris, I was unable to recognize Otto Bauer, so cruelly had defeat shriveled his solid, regular features, stamped not long ago with such noble confidence. He was to die suddenly, from a heart attack, but actually from the defeat of working-class Austria. On his deathbed his face recovered a wonderful expression of serenity.)

In the Mariahilferstrasse at night, I saw quite different groups of men, wearing uniforms and berets, marching in step by small detachments to the outlying hills, there to practice the use of weapons. Officers' associations, ex-servicemen, Starhemberg formations, crosses, swastikas . . . the politicians still denied that there was any Fascist danger in Austria. I was probably the first to denounce the danger, in 1925,

in Paris through the *Vie Ouvrière*, in Russia in an ineffectual pamphlet. This danger quite clearly arose from the fact that a working-class democracy, powerful in numbers, education, and achievement, but hemmed in on three sides, was consequently harried by the alternatives of either hopeless resistance or total impotence. So long as the Weimar Republic survived in Germany, working-class Austria could still hope. Once German Socialism collapsed, she was doomed. If only France and Czechoslovakia had not opposed the German-Austrian Anschluss when Germany and Austria were both democracies, the united strength of the two working classes could probably have blocked the way to Fascism; certainly they would have realized a number of impressive Socialist reforms. *If only*...

Blood and despair hovered in the giddy air of Vienna. One evening, at the time of the New Year, we were walking in a silken snowfall, surrounded by paper decorations and the *um-pa-pa*, *um-pa-pa* of Strauss waltzes, when an explosion rang out beneath the arcades of the Opera House: an unemployed man was blowing out his brains with a dynamite cartridge. Another fired on the Chancellor, Cardinal Seipel. Hugo Bettauer, a charming journalist who frequented nude dances, was propagating a sentimental Freudian eroticism in certain weekly journals with very special classified advertisements. A young fanatic drilled six bullets into the body of this "Jewish corrupter of Austria's youth."

I studied Marx and Freud and ran international press campaigns against the terror waged by employers and police in Spain, where all my old comrades were dying, one after the other, under the bullets of the Sindicato Libre. I inveighed against the White terror in "Bulgaria ruled by the knife." I stood with the Opposition in the Russian Party, which in 1923–24 was led by Preobrazhensky and largely inspired by Trotsky. In Russia a struggle was beginning whose gravity no one had yet gauged accurately. At the time when the date of the German Revolution was being fixed, forty-six old militants warned the Central Committee of two sorts of danger: the weakness of an industry unable to satisfy the needs of the countryside, and the stifling dictatorship of bureaucracy. In the spiritual impoverishment of recent years there had been only two flashes of daylight: two close-written little

books by Trotsky, the demands in *The New Course* and the analysis in *Lessons of October*—both works vilified by our official press. We would meet discreetly in some outer district to read and discuss these pulsating pages. Then, bound by discipline, prisoners to our daily bread, we went on endlessly printing our newssheets, with the same insipid, nauseating condemnations of everything that we knew to be true. Was it really worthwhile being revolutionaries if we had to ply this trade?

I refused to carry out a dishonest directive from Béla Kun, dealing with the French Party. A letter that had been sent to me from Moscow was mysteriously intercepted. A comrade who held high office in the International, and about as sincere as a genuine bad penny, tried to make me see reason. (He was not completely sure that we might not be the political victors of tomorrow.) In brief, you now enjoy an excellent situation in the apparatus; in Russia, as things stand at the moment, you can't be sure how things will turn out. After this ambiguous discussion I put in a categorical request for my return to Russia. The atmosphere of the International's departments was becoming impossible for me to breathe. Men like Monatte, Rosmer, and Souvarine were being hounded out of the French Party merely for having shown some evidence of political courage in demanding to see things Russian in their proper light. The Parties were changing their faces and even their language: a conventional jargon was settling upon our publications—we called it "Agitprop Pidgin." Everything now was only a matter of "one hundred percent approval of the correct line of the Executive," of "Bolshevik monolithism," of "the speedy Bolshevization of fraternal Parties." Such were the latest ingenuities of Zinoviev and Béla Kun. Why not three hundred percent approval? The Central Committees of all the Parties, who send appropriate telegrams at the first wink, have not, as yet, thought of that one. The system appears to have been perfected. A crony of mine jokes: "At the Fortieth Congress in Moscow a ninety-year-old Zinoviev will be seen propped up by nurses and waving his Presidential bell..." "Schools of Bolshevism" are being established, like the French one at Bobigny under Paul Marion (the same who was to become a Minister of Pétain and Laval in 1941) and Jacques Doriot. The International still presents an imposing façade,

and has thousands of working-class supporters who trust in it with all their heart, but I am watching it go rotten within. And I see that it can be saved only in Russia, by a regeneration of the Party. I have to go back.

"Above all," "Yuri" Lukács told me, as we roamed in the evening beneath the gray spires of the Votive Church, "don't be silly and get yourself deported for nothing, just for the pleasure of voting defiantly. Believe me, insults are not very important to us. Marxist revolutionaries need patience and courage; they do not need pride. The times are bad, and we are at a dark crossroads. Let us reserve our strength: history will summon us in its time."

I answered that if I found the Party atmosphere in Leningrad and Moscow too oppressive, I would ask for an assignment somewhere in Siberia and there, in the midst of the snows, far from the tortuosities of politics, I would write the books now maturing in my head and wait for better days. In an effort to break definitively with an old nightmare that still haunted me from time to time, I had, on the shores of a Carinthian lake, begun to write *Men in Prison*.

6.
DEADLOCK OF THE REVOLUTION
1926-1928

IT IS RAINING; the jetties are black. Two rows of dotted lamplight extend far back into the night. Between them, the black waters of the Neva. On both sides, cut into two, the dark city: inhospitable. It has not cast its misery aside. Four days ago, I was looking at the great glow outspread in the night sky over Berlin: Berlin that only recently knew inflation more incredible even than ours. We never paid more than a million for a lemon: in Berlin postage stamps were charged in trillions. Why does this prostration still weigh down on our Russian land? As we come out of the Customs, we are met by a run-down cab advancing over the puddles of mud; a ghost-horse and a rattling carriage, straight from some wretched town in Gogol's time. It has always been the same. A return to Russian soil rends the heart. "*Earth of Russia,*" wrote the poet Tyutchev, "*no corner of you is untouched by Christ the slave.*" The Marxist explains it in the same terms: "The production of commodities was never sufficient, the means of communication were always short..." And because of that the poor (and there have been some Christs among them), slaves to necessity, have had to take to the roads, barefoot, knapsacks on back, trailing from one steppe to the next, endlessly fleeing, endlessly seeking...

The atmosphere I find is calm, gloomy, oppressive. Lutovinov has committed suicide.[1] The metalworkers' organizer used to wander at night in Berlin, with Radek. The cocktails of the Kurfürstendamm scorched his throat: "When all's said and done, the bourgeoisie certainly invents some muck to get themselves drunk on! What am I

1. Yuri Lutovinov had caused offense through his leading part in the Workers' Opposition. His suicide occurred in May 1924.

going to do if I go back? I have told the Central Committee over and over again: we must take another look at the wages question. Our engineers are starving. After that, the Health Commission of the Party sent me abroad for a cure . . ."

Glazman has committed suicide. The background to this tragedy is hardly known; it all took place within the circle of Trotsky, President of the Supreme War Council. It is mentioned only in hushed tones. Glazman is not the only one.

Certain young people, expelled from the Party for demanding "the New Course," have turned revolvers on themselves. Young women, as everyone knows, prefer Veronal. What use is it to live if our Party refuses us the right to serve it? This newborn world is calling us, we belong to it and it alone—and look! In its name someone spits in our faces. "You are disqualified . . ." Disqualified because we are the Revolution's racked flesh, its outraged reason? It is better to die . . . The graph of suicides is mounting. The Central Control Commission meets in extraordinary session.

Evgenia Bogdanovna Bosch has committed suicide. Nothing has been published abroad about the death of one of Bolshevism's greatest personalities. The Civil War, the Ukraine (where, together with Piatakov, she headed the First Soviet Government), the troubles in Astrakhan, which she dealt with severely, the peasant counterrevolution of Perm, armies under her command: through it all she slept with a revolver under her pillow. The Party debate of 1923, the juggling with workers' democracy in equivocal Central Committee resolutions, the purge of the universities and the dictatorship of the secretaries all combined to depress her, and her strong, plain fighter's face, with its piercing eyes, grew hollow with sickness. Once Lenin died, her mind was made up. What was there left to do, with the Party deceived and divided, with Ilyich gone, what was there left to wait for, since she could no longer do anything herself? She went to bed and shot herself in the temple with a revolver. The Committees deliberated the question of her funeral rites. The more rigorous comrades argued that suicide, however justified it might be by incurable illness, remained an act of indiscipline. Besides, in this particular case suicide was a proof of Oppositional leanings. There was no national funeral, only a local

one; no urn in the Kremlin wall, only a place befitting her rank in the plot reserved for Communists in the Novodevichy cemetery. Forty lines of obituary in *Pravda*. Preobrazhensky exposed the underhand trickery of it all. When she had been handling the Germans, the Ukrainian Nationalists, the Whites, and the rural *Vendée*, what joker would have inquired into her official rank in the Party hierarchy? These very ideas did not exist then: Preobrazhensky was requested to hold his tongue. The specter of Lenin's flesh, robbed of all substance and spirit, lies under the Mausoleum while the hierarchy is only too alive, voracious even—it has not finished showing us yet.

Sergei Yesenin, our matchless poet, has committed suicide. The telephone rings: "Come quickly, Yesenin has killed himself." I run out in the snow, I enter his room in the Hotel International, and I can hardly recognize him; he no longer looks himself. The night before he had been drinking, of course, and then had said good night to his friends. "I want to be alone . . ." In the morning he awoke depressed, and felt the urge to write something. No pencil or fountain pen was at hand, and there was no ink in the hotel inkwell: only a razor blade, with which he slashed his wrist. And so, with a rusty pen dipped in his own blood, Yesenin wrote his last lines:

Au revoir, friend, au revoir . . . .
. . . There is nothing new about dying in this life
But there is surely nothing new about living either.

He asked the hotel to keep everyone out. They found him hanging with a suitcase strap round his neck, his forehead bruised by falling, as he died, against a heating pipe. Lying there washed and combed on his deathbed, his face was less soft than in life, his hair brown rather than golden; he had an expression of cold, distant harshness. I observed at the time: "One would think him a young soldier dying alone after some bitter defeat." Thirty years old, at his peak of glory, eight times married . . . He was our greatest lyrical poet, the poet of the Russian countryside, of the Moscow taverns, of the Revolution's singing Bohemians. He proclaimed the victory of the steel horses over the red-maned colts in the "*fields without a glimmer.*" He spawned lines

full of dazzling images, yet simple as the language of the villages. He plumbed his own descent into the abyss: "*Where have you led me, you, my reckless head?*" and "*I have been loathsome, I have been wicked—and all so that I could blaze more brilliantly . . .*"

He had tried to be in tune with the times, and with our official literature. "*I am a stranger in my own land . . .*"; "*My poems are no longer needed now, and I myself am unwanted . . .*"; "*Blossom, O young folk, in your healthy bodies . . . Your life is alien, your songs are alien . . .*"; "*I am not a new man, I have one foot in the past, and yet I wish, I the stumbler, I the cripple, to join the cohorts of steel once more . . .*"

We have it: unrelenting harshness
Which is the tale of man's suffering!
The sickle cuts the heavy stalks
As one cuts the throats of swans.

Vladimir Mayakovsky, the most popular of our poets after Yesenin, addressed a reproachful farewell to him:

So you have gone off
    As the saying is:
        To the next world . . .
The void . . .
    You circle in it,
        Hustling the stars.

Mayakovsky, athletic, coiled like a spring in a bantering style of violence, hammered out his farewell before audiences for whom this death was turning into a symbol:

This planet's not well equipped for happiness;
Happiness will only be won at a future date!

And Mayakovsky is soon to kill himself too, with a bullet in the heart, but that is another story. Through the night, through the snow

we carry the corpse of Sergei Yesenin. This is no age for dreaming and lyricism. Farewell, poet.

Lenka Panteleyev, one of the Kronstadt sailors of 1917, who stove in the gates of the Winter Palace with their rifle butts, has just ended his life's course in Leningrad. A legend has grown up about him in the underworld (for we have an underworld again). When money came back, Lenka felt that his end must be near. He was not a theoretician, but a straight egalitarian. He turned bandit to rob the first jeweler's shops to be opened by the first neo-capitalists of NEP. The other night, the militiamen who told me the story—admirers of Lenka—cornered him in his *malina* or hideout; he had been betrayed, naturally—it was a tale of women and drink. He came, threw off his leather jerkin, downed a glass of vodka, and took up his guitar. What should he sing? "*Roll under the ax, O head of Stenka Razin...*" They felled him in the middle of his song. The dangerous guitar was stopped. The militiamen, on pay of forty rubles a month, wear on their caps the red star, which the Pantaleyevs had been the first to sport.

Ilya Ionov, whom I had known in the days when, skinny as a yogi, he had got our ghosts of factories working, without fuel or raw materials. One evening, in that year of ice, 1919—six years ago now—when we were returning from the front at Ligovo, thirty minutes away from the city, he had told me, "We must throw all our last remaining forces into the firing line, even the anemic little seventeen-year-olds, everything except our brains. A few thinking heads at the rear, well guarded by machine guns, and everything else into the firing line: that's what I say!"

Nowadays even my friend I. has stopped thinking. In 1919 we had planned, with him and a few others, a ferocious last-ditch resistance ending with explosions and arson, "to show them what it costs to kill us!" Now, we have evening reunions at his house, where we play cards. An atmosphere of mild affluence reigns in this flat: fine books, miniatures, heraldic tableware, dark mahogany furniture dating back to the Emperor Paul. This is what remains of the spoils of many an expropriation, such as is to be found in the houses of a number of Party

stalwarts. I knew fair-haired Lisa Ionova in the days when, emaciated and crazy-eyed, she saw her first child die of starvation. Now they have another child, who is far better fed than the children of our unemployed workers. Lisa is now a plump blonde who wears a necklace of heavy gems from the Urals. There is still a slight hint of madness in her eyes, which makes me long to come out with some sharp questions: "*Quite a smash-up in those days, wasn't it? Do you remember Mazin's body under the fir trees? And the corpse of that little sculptor Bloch who got shot, we never knew why? And his wife's corpse, so childlike she was? Tell me, do you remember?*" But I say nothing of the sort; it would not be nice, the world has changed. Grisha Yevdokimov comes to make up a card game with us. He is home from Germany, where the Central Committee had sent him for an alcoholic's cure. We talk about the Pushkov affair: and so life goes on. (We do not talk politics, because I am a disgraced Oppositionist and they know it, and because they are anxious for the future and I know it: within the Politburo an odd coolness has sprung up between Zinoviev, with whom they are friendly, and Stalin. Ionov was shot in 1937.)

Pushkov I met in the old days, when he was running the Petrokommuna, or Central Cooperative of the Petrograd Commune. The reason why he has just been cast into the darkness (which is what expulsion from the Party amounts to) was as follows. The Control Commission's resolution speaks of "irregular conduct in management (to be referred to the courts) and demoralization." Pushkov was a married man. At his place, too, people played cards on Sunday evening, with glasses of tea to hand. He loved his wife with a passion whose intensity ill fitted his character as a materialist administrator. When death suddenly took her from him, he forgot that matter is perishable, and that the cult of the dead is symptomatic of those ancestral ideologies that have been formally condemned by Party teaching. He had her remains embalmed, and a vault made for her in a cemetery where she could sleep under a canopy of glass. If Lenin could repose in a mausoleum, the better to survive in the memory of mankind, why should not she be likewise preserved for one man's remembrance? Pushkov is honest, but a glass coffin is expensive: he meddled with the funds of the collective. No one will mention him again. I do

not know why, but what I find saddest of all in the whole affair is the thought of a dead woman consigned once again to oblivion.

The Menchoy case worried us more because Menchoy was a publicist, a sort of Jewish-American businessman, with large fish eyes framed in horn-rimmed glasses, dressed in the best English worsted, always in the latest styles, and of course always engaged with serious projects. I had met him recently, just back from America to run the English section of the International on behalf of the Executive in Moscow with Rothstein, the historian of the Chartist movement. Expelled, arrested, sent to the Solovietsky Islands, he is mentioned with anger and disgust. He was an official Communist who betrayed. He sent some articles against the Party line under various pseudonyms to a barely tolerated literary periodical. At his home, notes were discovered, of a nauseating nature. Extracts like the following are cited: "Got eight hundred rubles today for the bit of junk I knocked out on Lenin. Paid for two hookers and we got famously plastered." Can you imagine, a comrade said, the man who was living among us and leading such a double life was writing propaganda pamphlets on Lenin for the Moscow Committee! Rotten to his soul! Of course I understood. All you need is to see the city and the streets.

The sordid taint of money is visible on everything again. The grocers have sumptuous displays, packed with Crimean fruits and Georgian wines, but a postman earns about fifty rubles a month. There are 150,000 without jobs in Leningrad alone: their dole varies between twenty and twenty-seven rubles a month. Agricultural day workers and female servants get fifteen, with their board added, it is true. Party officials receive from 180 to 225 rubles a month, the same as skilled workers. Hordes of beggars and abandoned children, hordes of prostitutes. We have three large gaming houses in town, where baccarat, roulette, and chemin de fer are played, sinister dives with crime always hovering around the corner. The hotels laid on for foreigners and Party officials have bars that are complete with tables covered in soiled white linen, dusty palm trees, and alert waiters who know secrets beyond the Revolution's ken. What would you like—a dose of "snow"? At the Europa bar thirty girls show off their makeup and cheap rings to men in fur-lined coats and caps who are drinking glasses brimming

with alcohol: of these a third are thieves, a third embezzlers, and another third workers and comrades deep in a black mood which, around 3:00 a.m., breaks out into fights and drawn knives. And then, the other night, I heard someone shouting, with a strange pride: "*I've* been a member of the Party since 1917!" The year when the whole world shook. Here, on snowy nights before dawn, sledges are halted, drawn by proud thoroughbreds, their drivers bearded just like those who served the playboys of Tsarist days. And the manager of a nationalized factory, the wholesaler in textiles from the Lenin Factory, the assassin hunted by informers who are drinking with him—all drive off smartly with some daughter of the Volga or Riazan squeezed up close on the narrow seat, some daughter of famine and chaos with nothing to sell but her youth, and too much thirst for life to join the list of suicides that it is my task as an editor to check. Leningrad lives at the cost of ten to fifteen suicides a day, mainly among the under-thirties.

You could take the lift to the roof of the Hotel Europa, and there find another bar, like any in Paris or Berlin, full of lights, dancing, and jazz, and even more depressing than the one on the ground floor. Two of us writers were there in the deserted hall, just starting a drab night out, when Mayakovsky walked in with his usual athletic tread. He came and leant on the bar near us.

"How goes it?"

"All right. Hell!"

"Fed up?"

"No. But one day I'll blow my brains out. Everybody's a bastard!" It was several years before his suicide. Mayakovsky was earning a great deal of money publishing official poetry, which could sometimes be very powerful.

Our aim is still to be a party of poor men, and little by little money becomes master, money corrupts everything—even as it makes life blossom everywhere. In less than five years, freedom of trade has worked miracles. There is no more famine, and an intoxicating zest for life rises about us, sweeping us away, giving us the unfortunate sensation of slipping downhill very fast. Our country is a vast convalescent body, but on this body, whose flesh is our own, we see the pustules multiplying.

When I was Chairman of a cooperative tenement, I had a long struggle to get a girl student given a maid's room in our thoroughly bourgeoisified piece of property; the accounts, presented to me by an engineer, were absolutely crooked, and I had to sign them just the same. One of our fellow lodgers was quite openly enriching himself by reselling, at high prices, textiles that had been sold him by a nationalized factory at the special cheap rate for the poorly paid. How was it possible? Because the demand for manufactured goods outran supply to the tune of 400 million rubles' worth. The workers went to the taverns to escape their wretched family lives; the housewives in the area of the Red Putilov Works pleaded with the Party Committees to find a way of deducting some part of their drunken husbands' wages to hand over to them. On payday some workers could be seen sprawled blind drunk on the pavements, and others greeted all and sundry with catcalls. They regarded me with particular venom as a bespectacled intellectual. A Committee for Child Relief ran the Vladimirsky Club, a disreputable gambling den. There I saw a woman hit in the face and thrown down the steps with her clothes half torn off. The manager came over to talk to me and told me quite coolly, "What are you so shocked about? She's nothing but a whore! Just put yourself in my shoes!" He is a Communist, this manager: we belong to the same Party.

Business livens up society, after a fashion, but it is the most corrupt kind of business imaginable. Retail trade, i.e., the distribution of manufactured articles, has passed into the hands of private enterprise, which has triumphed over the cooperative and State trading systems. Where does this capital, nonexistent five years ago, all come from? From robbery, fraudulent speculation, and superbly skillful racketeering. Twisters start up a fake cooperative; they bribe officials to give them credits, raw materials, and orders. Yesterday they had nothing; the Socialist State has given them everything, on burdensome terms it is true, for contracts, agreements, and orders are all fixed by corruption. Once launched, they carry on, determined to become the universal middlemen between socialized industry and the consumer. They double the price of everything. Soviet trade, as a consequence of our industrial weakness, has become the hunting ground for a swarm

of predators in whom tomorrow's toughest and most resourceful capitalists can be clearly discerned. In this respect, NEP is an unquestionable setback. The prosecutors, from Krylenko downwards, spend their days in useless trials for speculation. One shabby little character named Plyatsky, carroty and talkative, is at the hub of all corruption and speculation in Leningrad. This Balzacian man of affairs has floated companies by the dozen, bribed officials in every single department—and he is not shot, because basically he is indispensable: he keeps everything going. NEP has become one big confidence trick. The same holds good, although in a different form, in the countryside. A single year's sheep-raising in the south has produced Soviet millionaires of a most curious brand: former Red partisans, whose daughters live in the finest hotels in the Crimea, whose sons play for high stakes in the casinos.

In an entirely different sphere, the gigantic scale of certain royalties encourages the gradual growth of an official literature. The dramatists Shchegolev (the historian) and Alexei Tolstoy* are reaping hundreds of thousands of rubles for their slick plays about Rasputin and the Empress, and many of our young writers dream only of imitating them. It is only a matter of writing in a style that fits popular taste and the directives of the Central Committee's Cultural Section. Not that this is so very easy. It is becoming obvious that, despite the sterling resistance of most of the young Soviet writers, we have on our hands a literature that is conformist and corrupt. Things are coming back to life, but everywhere we can see symptoms of a process that eludes us, threatens us, and portends our doom.

It was Konstantinov who gave the solution to the equation. We knew each other, though we had never met. I loathed him, but was beginning to understand him. Somebody told me, "He is a literary man: he collects original manuscripts. He has some of Tolstoy, Andreyev, Chekhov, and Rozanov. A materialist, but he has begun to join the company of mystics. A bit cracked, but intelligent. Used to be in the Cheka—says he's very fond of you."

In a tenement on the Right Bank I found a few people in a room lit by a chandelier. An old man spoke to us of Rozanov, in whom there had been something of Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and Freud, all subsumed in

a carnal Christianity that was perpetually at war with itself. A saintly obsessive, who had delved very deep into the moral problem and the sex problem. He thought of himself as a moral reptile—not that he wanted to be, but he told himself that everyone is like that at heart anyway, and so, ever so slightly, he really became one. Author of *Fallen Leaves*: meditations on life, death, hypocrisy, fleshly impurity, and the *Savior*, a book written on sheets of lavatory paper in the WC. He had died at the same time as Lenin, and the memories he left among the Russian intelligentsia ran deep. They spoke of him as though he had just gone out of the room.

The company included some young women and a thin, tall man with a little dyed blond mustache. I recognized him at once: Ott, head of the Cheka's administrative section in 1919 and 1920. An Estonian or Lett, gifted with a bloodless imperturbability, he attended to all the form filling, with the executions going on all around him. Konstantinov had thinning hair, a bony nose, dark lips, spectacles; I did not recognize him, although he treated me as an old acquaintance. It was only later on that he drew me aside and said, "Actually, you know me well: I was the examining magistrate in the Bayrach case . . ."

Indeed, how could I have forgotten him? This was the Cheka man against whom, in 1920, a French Communist and I had waged a long struggle for the lives of some indubitably innocent men, whom he wanted shot at all costs. I will not recount this trivial case. There was the incident of the bloodstained shirt that was brought to me out of jail; the incident of the girl with the face of an odalisque before whom this sadistic magistrate had dangled fantastic traps and promises with degrading conditions attached to them. There were indeed many incidents, and finally we did save the accused men, by going to the leading circles of the Cheka, Xenofontov, I believe. At the Petrograd Cheka the comrades had talked of the examining magistrate in ambiguous terms: a hard man, incorruptible (he only pretended to be willing to sell his clemency), a sadist perhaps, "but you must understand—it's all psychology!" I avoided meeting him, believing him to be a dangerous character, a professional maniac. And, seven years later, here he was offering me tea, treating me as a friend.

"Your protégés went off to Constantinople where, no doubt, they

have become big racketeers. You were quite wrong to take so much trouble to stop me liquidating them. I knew of course that, from a formal point of view, they were innocent, but we had plenty on file against them. That's unimportant now. In other cases, I was never prevented from doing my revolutionary duty, even by much more powerful people than you. It was I who..."

He had been one of those Chekists who, in January 1920, just as Lenin and Dzerzhinsky were issuing the decree to abolish the death penalty, had arranged an execution at night, involving the massacre of several hundred suspects at the very last minute, when presses were already rolling out the new decree.

"So it was you. And what now?"

Now, he was on the fringe of the Party, not positively expelled but pensioned off and tolerated. From time to time he would take the train to Moscow and go to the Central Committee, where he would be received by a senior secretary. Konstantinov would bring out his file of secrets, bulging with fresh titbits and supplemented by that irrefutable source of accusation, his memory. He would utter proofs, accusations, and the names of high personages, but still did not dare to tell everything. They would kill him.

He proposed to tell me nearly everything. Whence came this confidence in me? "You are an Oppositionist? You are missing the real question altogether. You don't suspect anything..." At first he talked by allusion, and we discussed what was going on, what Lenin had foreseen when he said, "You think you are driving the machine, and yet it is driving you, and suddenly other hands than yours are on the wheel."

Unemployment statistics, wage scales; the home market ruled by "private enterprise, itself born out of the plunder of the State; rural misery, and rise of a peasant bourgeoisie; Comintern incompetence and Rapallo policies; privation in the towns and arrogant nouveaux riches—do these results strike you as being quite natural? And have we done all that we have done, only to come to this?"

Konstantinov lays his cards on the table, unveils his secret to me. The secret is that everything has been betrayed. From the years when Lenin was alive, treason has wormed its way into the Central Com-

mittee. He knows the names, he has the proofs. He cannot tell me everything, it's too dangerous: they know that he knows. If anyone guessed that I have heard it from him I would be a doomed man. It is all tremendous and appalling. The exposure of this plot demands infinite clairvoyance, a genius for inquisition, and absolute discretion. At the peril of his life, he is submitting his analysis of the gigantic crime, studied over years, to the Central Committee. He whispers the names of foreigners, of the most powerful capitalists, and of yet others that have an occult significance for him. He specifies a city across the Atlantic. I follow his chain of reasoning with the secret uneasiness that one feels in the presence of some lunatic logician. And I observe that he has the inspired face of a madman. But in all that he says, he is driven by one basic idea that is not the idea of a madman: "We did not create the Revolution to come to this."

We leave each other bound by a mutual confidence. It is a white night, and the trams have stopped running. I walk away with Ott. Crossing a bridge that lies between dull sky and fog-colored water, I notice that my companion has not changed in six years. He still wears his long cavalry coat without badges of rank, he has the same stolid bearing, the same half-smile under his pale little mustache, as if he were still on his way out of Cheka headquarters on a winter night in 1920. He is entirely in agreement with Konstantinov. His argument is crystal clear, isn't it? We hold the threads of the plot, this plot of blackest treachery and infinite ramifications, the worldwide plot against the first Socialist republic... everything can still be saved, if only... there are still a few men in the Central Committee. But who?

The pale city of two in the morning opened its great, depopulated vistas to us. It seemed preoccupied: a cold stone model, full of memories. We had passed by the blue cupola of the Mosque. On the little hill towards our right the five heroes of the Masonic Decembrist conspiracy had been hanged in 1825. On our left, in the small mansion that had once belonged to a favorite of Nicholas II, the Bolshevik conspiracy of 1917 had been organized. The gilt spire of the Peter-Paul Fortress poked up above its casemates and the river. There in his chains Nechayev had dreamed his prodigious plot to overthrow the Empire. There too the conspirators of Narodnaya Volya had expired,

left to die of starvation, in the years 1881 to 1883. Many of their younger comrades are still alive: the link they forged continues down to ourselves. We were approaching the tombstones in the Field of Mars, walled around by red granite ramparts: our own tombstones. Just opposite, in the Engineers' Castle, Paul I was done to death by his own officers. "Just one plot after another, isn't it?" said Ott, with his smile. "All that was just child's play. Today..."

I felt an urge to reply (but it would have been useless with a paranoiac like this): "Today things are not nearly so easy as that. It's all quite different. And, my poor Ott, these plots that you are inventing are quite redundant..."

If I have sketched these portraits and recorded these conversations of the year 1926, it is because they reveal a certain atmosphere even then, the obscure early stages of a psychosis. Much later the whole of Soviet Russia was to experience years of tragedy when it would live ever more intensely in the grip of this psychosis, which must be a psychological phenomenon unique in history. (Konstantinov disappeared in the early thirties, after being deported to Central Siberia.)

The calm of the workers' city of Leningrad was suddenly broken by the dramatic incident of Chubarov Alley, which shed a sinister light on the conditions under which our youth lived. About fifteen young workers from the San-Galli works had raped an unfortunate girl, the same age as they, on a piece of waste ground near the October railway station. This took place in the Ligovka quarter, a district where the underworld and the working class met, full of scabby tenements. The Party's Control Commission, now overloaded with nasty little morals cases, had a sort of epidemic of collective rapes to investigate. Doubtless sexuality, so long repressed, first by revolutionary asceticism and then by poverty and famine, was beginning to recover its drive in a society that had been abruptly cut off from any spiritual nourishment. Two cases of a similar nature were being investigated at the Students' Residence in Jeliabova Street, the former Bear Hotel, Medved, a short distance from where I lived. On the same evening two private parties, in two different rooms, had each finished with a young woman being taken advantage of by a group of drunk young males... I visited this Residence with a health commission. The rooms were des-

titute and almost bare of furniture. Rags were hanging from the window latches. Strewn on the floor were spirit lamps and little tin bowls, books and broken shoes scattered in the corner. On the iron bedsteads, usually without springs, there were planks and on the planks the mattress. If there were sheets, they were gray with grime. In one huge room we found a mattress on the floor and three young people, two boys and a girl, fast asleep. Promiscuity fed upon the misery of the environment. Books like those by Alexandra Kollontai propagated an oversimplified theory of free love: an infantile variety of materialism reduced "sexual need" to its strictly animal connotation. "You make love just as you drink a glass of water, to relieve yourself." The most sophisticated section of youth, the university students, was discussing Enchmen's theory (contested by Bukharin) on the disappearance of morals in the future Communist society.

The fifteen defendants from Chubarov Alley were given a show trial in a workers' clubroom, with the portrait of Lenin overlooking all. Rafail, the editor of the *Leningrad Pravda*, presided; he was a tame, crafty-looking, bald official. At no moment did he give the slightest indication of understanding the tangled complexity of human baseness and poverty-induced corruption that it was his task to unravel in the name of working-class justice. A hall full of men and women workers followed the cross-examination in an atmosphere of suspenseful boredom. The accused fifteen had the typical faces of Ligovka gutter kids, fusing the peasant and proletarian types with primitive brutality as their salient feature. They offered confessions and denounced one another with no inhibitions about giving details. If ever the case diverged from the strictly factual they could not follow it, and found it all a great fuss to be made over things that often just pass by without any bother. What was more natural than sex on waste sites? And what if she didn't mind mating with four, five, or six? She would have got just as pregnant or diseased if it had only been one. And if she did mind, perhaps it's because she had "prejudices."

Certain parts of the cross-examination are still clear in my memory. The lack of any insight on the part of the accused was so primitive in its quality that the magistrate Rafail, good committeeman that he was, was continually put out by it. He had just been so foolish as to

talk of "new culture" and "our wonderful Soviet morals." A short, fair-haired lad with a flat nose answered him:

"Never heard of 'em."

Rafail went on, "Of course, you'd prefer foreign bourgeois morals, wouldn't you?"

It was ridiculous, it was horrible. The boy replied, "I don't know nothing about them. I've never been abroad, I haven't."

"You could have got to know about them through reading foreign newspapers."

"I never even see Soviet newspapers. The Ligovka streets, that's the only culture I know."

Five of the accused were condemned to death. In order to be able to carry out the sentence, the authorities had to twist the law and accuse them of "banditry." On the evening of the verdict, the sky above the city glowed purple. I walked towards the glow: the whole of the San-Galli works was in flames. The five condemned youths were executed on the following day. There was a rumor that the workers who had started the fire had been executed secretly, but this was impossible to confirm.

I was taken by a sudden yearning to know this social inferno of ours, whose great flames cried out into the night. I burrowed into our Soviet doss-houses. I was there when they rounded up the girls they kept sending, by administrative decree, to the concentration camps of the Far North. I can honestly say that Dostoevsky had not seen it all; in any case, I discovered that since Dostoevsky's day nothing, in certain dark corners of our world, has changed for the better. O my fellow tramps of Paris, how difficult is social transformation!

It was at this time that Vassily Nikiforovich Chadayev waylaid me in the Leningrad Press Institute on the Fontanka Embankment, where the Countess Panina used to reside.

"*Taras has told me about you...*" Taras was a password name that had been given me in Piatakov's circle in Moscow so that I could contact the clandestine Opposition in Leningrad. The "Trotskyists" as a group had withdrawn from political activity, and since 1923 had been playing a waiting game. This was the Center that guided the Left Opposition in the area, and I was invited to join it. We used to meet in a

room at the Astoria, usually that of N. I. Karpov, a professor of agricultural science who had been an army commissar. Those who went there consisted of two or three students of working-class origin; two Old Bolshevik workers who had been in every revolution in Petrograd for the last twenty years; X——, an unassuming man, formerly the organizer of a Party printshop, who had been dropped from various sinecures because of his excessive integrity and who, ten years after the seizure of power, was living as poorly as he always had, pale and scraggy under his faded cloth cap; Feodorov, a huge red-haired fellow, splendidly strapping, with an open face fit for a barbarian warrior, a factory worker who was soon to leave our group, ultimately to meet his death as a member of the Zinoviev tendency. We also included two Marxist theoreticians of genuine worth, Yakovin and Dingelstedt. Grigory Yakovlevich Yakovin, aged thirty, had returned from Germany, on which country he had just written an excellent book. A sporting enthusiast with a constantly alert intelligence, good looks, and a spontaneous charm, he was to spend some years in ingenious daring and dangerous illegality, and then to do the rounds of the jails for an undetermined period, there to disappear in 1937.

Fedor Dingelstedt had been, at the age of twenty, one of the Bolshevik agitators (together with Ensign Roshal, Ilyin-Genevsky, and Raskolnikov) who had been behind the mutiny of the Baltic fleet in 1917. He was in charge of the Institute of Forestry and was having a book published on "The Agrarian Question in India." Among us he represented an extreme-Left tendency similar to Sapronov's group, who considered that the degeneration of the regime was now complete. Dingelstedt's face, with its harsh, inspired ugliness, was a picture of invincible obstinacy. "They will never break him." I used to reflect. I was not mistaken: he was to follow the same path as Yakovin without ever giving in.

"Babushka," or "Grandmother," usually took the chair at our meetings. Plump, her hair white over her kindly face, Alexandra Lvovna Bronstein was the last word in common sense and honesty. She had some thirty-five years of militancy behind her, including exile in Siberia; she had been Trotsky's wife in his first years of struggle, and had borne him two daughters, Nina and Zina (who were both to perish . . .).

The only work allowed her was elementary instruction in sociology to children under fifteen, and that was not to last long. I have known few Marxists as free in their basic outlook as Alexandra Lvovna.

Nikolai Pavlovich Baskakov, a small, powerful man with a tall, indented forehead and blue eyes, thought it was now questionable whether the system could be reformed. He went into the jails, where I do not know what became of him. Together with Chadayev and myself, who specialized in international questions, this was the roll call of the Center. I insist on one historical point: there was never any other Center of the Left Opposition in Leningrad.

Chadayev became my friend. He was to be the first of our number who was killed. Long before the Party leadership, he raised the question of the collectivization of agriculture, in a remarkable set of theses. He was the only one of us to put the question of a second party—in private—and the only one to foresee the great trials of deception. A fighter from 1917, an editor on the evening paper *Krassnaya Gazeta*, he was led through his knowledge of the condition of the working class to a realistic appraisal of political problems. He watched the disorders at the Labor Exchange, which was in the end wrecked by the unemployed.

"In that riot," he said, "I saw a fantastic woman who reminded me of the best days of 1917. She gave purpose, and almost order, to the tumult. Her appearance was insignificant, but I could see that she was cut out to be a leader. And it is working-class women like her that have to come out against us!" Together we watched the disgusting trial of the Labor Exchange officials, who would not send a woman to a factory job unless she were reasonably good-looking and, what was more, obliging. He left behind him several precious booklets filled with observations that, like so many others, probably went to be pulped.

The Party was in a state of slumber. Meetings were hardly noticed by the apathetic public. Since the purge of the universities, the youth had turned in upon itself. In Moscow, in a modest house in Petrovka, at Glavkonzesskom, the main Concessions committee, Trotsky was studying the proposals of a Mr. Urquart, was in discussions with the Lena Goldfields, and had learnt that Mr. Hammer, citizen of the

United States, having succeeded in setting up the first pencil factory in Russia, was now growing rich abroad as he had been allowed to repatriate his profits... Around Trotsky, a group of old comrades, who were all actually young, worked on other matters. His office is unique in the world, a laboratory where ideas are ceaselessly developed. Work there proceeds with great punctuality. The meeting arranged for ten o'clock is for ten and not for two minutes after ten. Georges Andreytchine is also there, a vigorous Balkan with burning eyes that are set deep in a high, pale forehead. Former IWW militant in America, this youth senses the future: "The petty bourgeoisie which is getting richer and digging in all around us, if we don't break its back, it will smash us one of these days..." He is not alone in holding this view. (Andreytchine will soon be miserably defeated, will leave us on account of his wife's illness, and on returning from exile will tell us, "I have turned into a sellout"; he will become a senior commerce official with the US, and in turn will perish.) All the same, we were, for the time being, fairly optimistic, for Trotsky was publishing a series of articles proving that we were on the way "to Socialism, not capitalism," and supporting the preservation of a marginal private sector (which would take the force of all crises) around the nationalized factories. I discussed these ideas in the Paris journal *Vie Ouvrière*. Victor Eltsin brought me a directive from the Old Man (Trotsky): "For the moment we must not act at all: no showing ourselves in public but keep our contacts, preserve our cadres of 1923, and wait for Zinoviev to exhaust himself..." Writing good books and publishing Leon Davidovich's *Collected Works* was to be our means of keeping up morale. Victor Eltsin had the cool temperament of a tactician. He also told me that in Moscow the Left Opposition could muster more than five hundred comrades. Sermuks was a fair-haired, gentlemanly type, refined and circumspect; Poznansky a tall Jew with untidy hair. These were the three secretaries of Trotsky, all of them aged about thirty to thirty-five; towards the Old Man they would keep faith unshakably, until Heaven knows what terrible death.

The storm broke quite out of the blue. Even we were not awaiting its coming. Certain remarks of Zinoviev, whom I had seen weary and dull-eyed, should have warned me... Passing through Moscow in the

spring of 1925, I learnt that Zinoviev and Kamenev, who were to all appearances still all-powerful as the two foremost figures in the Politburo since Lenin's death, were about to be overthrown at the forthcoming Fourteenth Party Congress, and that Stalin was offering the Department of Industry to Trotsky... The 1923 Opposition asked itself who its allies should be. Mrachkovsky, the hero of the Urals battles, declared, "We will not ally ourselves with anyone. Zinoviev would end by deserting us and Stalin would trick us." The militants of the old Workers' Opposition proved to be noncommittal, since they believed us to be too weak and, as they said, distrusted Trotsky's authoritarian temper. My own opinion was that it was impossible for the bureaucratic regime stemming from Zinoviev to get any harsher; nothing could be worse than it. Any change must offer some opportunity for purification. I was very much mistaken, as is now obvious.

Grossman-Roschin, a leader of the syndicalist group Golos Truda ("Voice of Labor"), who was also the only member of the group still at liberty, came to tell me how disturbed he was: "Stalin is grumbling about the clowns and stooges in the Comintern, and is getting ready to cut off their rations once he has sacked Zinoviev. Aren't you afraid of some damage happening to the Communist International through this?" I answered, "Nothing could be better for the International than to have all its rations cut off. The commercial characters will go elsewhere, the artificial Parties will die away, and the working-class movement will be able to recover its health."

As a matter of fact, the Fourteenth Congress, of December 1925, was a well-rehearsed play, acted just as its producer had planned over several years. All the regional secretaries, who were appointed by the General Secretary, had sent Congress delegates who were loyal to his service. The easy victory of the Stalin-Rykov-Bukharin coalition was an office victory over Zinoviev's group, which only controlled offices in Leningrad. The Leningrad delegation, led by Zinoviev, Yevdokimov, and Bakayev and supported by Kamenev—all doomed to the firing squad in 1936—found itself isolated when it came to the vote. Zinoviev and Kamenev were paying for years of responsibility devoid of any glory or success: two defeated revolutions, in Germany and Bulgaria; the bloody and imbecilic episode of Estonia; at home the

revival of class distinctions, about two million unemployed, scarcity of goods, conflict simmering between the peasantry and the dictatorship, the extinction of all democracy; in the Party, Purges, repression (still mild, but shocking because it was new), the multiplication of slanders against the organizer of victory, Trotsky. Certainly Stalin had a share in the responsibility for all these doings, but he wriggled out of it by turning on his colleagues in the triumvirate. Zinoviev and Kamenev were quite literally falling under the weight of their own errors, and yet we could see that at this particular hour they were more or less right. They opposed the makeshift doctrine of "Socialism in a single country," in the name of the whole tradition of International Socialism. Kamenev used the expression "State capitalism" in speaking of the wretched condition of the workers, and advocated that the wage earners should share in their factories' profits. Zinoviev's crime was that he demanded the right to take the platform at Congress to present his own report. The whole Central Committee press chose to see in this an attack on the unity of the Party. Bukharin was sick of the reign of mediocrity; he hoped to become the "brain" behind Stalin. Rykov, President of the Council of People's Commissars; Tomsky, the head of the trade unions; Voroshilov, the head of the army; and Kalinin, the President of the Central Executive, were all carefully watching the state of peasant discontent and uttering condemnations of international adventure. The mass of Party officials wanted nothing more than to live a quiet life.

Zinoviev, whose demagogy was quite sincere, believed every word he said about the warm support of Leningrad's working-class masses for his own clique. "Our fortress is impregnable," I heard him say. He took the opinions that his subordinates cooked up in the *Leningrad Pravda* as being representative of real public opinion. He came back to make his appeal to the Party and the masses at a time when the Party was no more than a phantom in the imagination of bureaucrats and the masses were apathetic and dormant. The resistance of Leningrad, which I had seen for myself, was crushed in a fortnight, even though on certain nights workers loyal to Zinoviev came to mount guard over the newspaper's printshop in anticipation of a forcible putsch. The proletarian district of Vyborg, which had been famous

ever since the days of March 1917, was the first to give in. The same men were no longer there, neither was the same spirit. In every local committee there were shrewd folk who knew that a declaration in favor of the Central Committee was the first step in a career. The better members were disarmed by their respect, or rather fetishism, towards the Central Committee. The Central Committee sent Gusev and Stetsky along to us to install new committees. Stetsky, a man of thirty-five, was a disciple of Bukharin: his pose was that of the "Soviet American"—neatly dressed, clean-shaven, genial, round head, and round glasses, very friendly to the intellectuals, joining them in investigating "the problems." (Later he was to betray Bukharin, temporarily replacing him as a theoretician in Stalin's circle, and then to develop a blatant theory of the totalitarian State, before disappearing into jail around 1938.)

I heard Gusev speaking to big Party meetings. Large, slightly bald, and well-built, he got at his audience through the degrading hypnotism that is associated with systematic violence. In order to argue in this particularly foul manner one must, first, be sure of having force at one's elbow, and, secondly, make up one's mind to stop at nothing. It is, at bottom, a fear-making technique. Not a single word of his won conviction, but the losers had got themselves into hot water, there was nothing for it but to vote for the Central Committee... We of the Opposition walked out before the vote was taken, silence all around us. The very low level of education of some of the listeners, and the material dependence of all of them on the approval of Party committees, guaranteed the success of the operation. Under Gusev's hammer blows the formal majority that Zinoviev had enjoyed in Leningrad since 1918 crumbled away in a week.

Our own "Leading Center of the Left Opposition" had abstained in this battle. We were taken aback by the news that Trotsky had concluded an agreement with the "Leningrad Opposition." How could we sit at the same table with the bureaucrats who had hunted and slandered us—who had murdered the principles and ideas of the Party?

The old leaders of the Leningrad Party, nearly all of whom I had known since 1919, Yevdokimov, Bakayev, Lashevich, Zorin, Ionov,

Makhimson, and Gertik, seemed to have undergone a change of heart overnight; I could not help thinking that they must have felt enormously relieved to escape from the stifling fog of lies and shake us by the hand. They spoke admiringly of Trotsky, the same man that they had covered with odious abuse a couple of days ago. They described, in considerable detail, the first talks he had held with Zinoviev and Kamenev. Their relationship was "better than ever—just like in 1918." This was the time when Zinoviev and Kamenev presented Trotsky with letters testifying how, in conference with Stalin, Bukharin, and Rykov, they had decided to fabricate a doctrine of "Trotskyism" against which they could unloose smear campaigns. They made even more serious revelations with which I will deal later. They signed a declaration recognizing that on the question of the Party's internal regime the 1923 Opposition (Preobrazhensky, Trotsky, Rakovsky, and Antonov-Ovseyenko) had been right against them.

Twenty or so sympathizers were gathered around our Leningrad Center. The Zinoviev tendency declared that it could count on a clandestine membership of between five and six hundred. We had our doubts about this figure, but decided to open a recruiting campaign aimed at creating an organization of similar size, in preparation for the time when the forces of both tendencies would be brought face-to-face. The Zinoviev group, knowing our weakness, demanded the immediate fusion of the two organizations. We hesitated to hand over the list of our leading members to them. What would they be up to tomorrow? A number of us suggested that we conceal certain names from our newly found allies—a proposition we rejected as being disloyal. Our agitators set to work. We held semi-clandestine meetings from district to district. Chadayev, the organizer of the central area, would come to see me at night, eyes blazing out of his wrinkled face, and announce the day's results: "I tell you that we shall have 400 comrades organized on the day of the merger!" We were actually to surpass this total, but out of suspicion we kept putting off the merger.

Nechayev and Chadayev went to Moscow to inform Trotsky of our fears. I followed them for the purpose of briefing Leon Davidovich and presenting our objections to him. On that day Leon Davidovich was shivering with fever; his lips were violet-colored, but his

shoulders were still set firmly and the cast of his face displayed intelligence and will. He justified the amalgamation on the grounds of the necessity to unite the political forces of both the two working-class capitals, Leningrad and Moscow. "It is a battle which will be difficult to win," he said calmly, "but we have excellent chances, and the salvation of the Revolution depends on it." Someone brought coded telegrams in to him. In the large waiting room at the Concessions Commission two bearded peasants in sheepskins and clogs of plaited bark were parleying with Sermuks for an interview with Trotsky, to whom they were anxious to submit an interminable legal dispute they had been having with the local authorities of a distant country district. "Now that Lenin is dead," they kept repeating stubbornly, "there is only Comrade Trotsky to give us justice."

"He will certainly see you," Sermuks would answer patiently, all dapper and smiling, "but he can do nothing now; he is no longer in the Government." The muzhiks shook their heads, visibly annoyed that someone was trying to make them believe that "Trotsky can do nothing now."

"Pretend to be blowing your nose when you go out," one of the secretaries told me. "The GPU has put men with cameras in the house opposite. Apart from that, some of the 'comrades'..."

Preobrazhensky and Smilga were sent to us by the Moscow Center to unify the leadership of the two Leningrad oppositions. Preobrazhensky had the broad features and short auburn beard that befitted a man of the people. He had driven himself so hard that during the meetings it seemed that he might at any moment drop off to sleep, but his brain was still fresh, and crammed with statistics on the agrarian problem.

Smilga, an economist and former army leader who in 1917 had been Lenin's confidential agent in the Baltic fleet, was a fair-haired intellectual in his forties with spectacles, a chin beard, and thinning front hair, ordinary to look at and distinctly the armchair sort. He spoke for a whole evening in a little room to about fifty workers who could not move at all, so closely were they squeezed together. A Latvian giant with gingerish hair and an impassive face scrutinized all who came in. Smilga, sitting on a stool in the middle of the room, spoke, in

an expert's tone and without one agitational phrase, of production, unemployment, grain and budgetary figures, and of the plan that we were hotly advocating. Not since the first days of the Revolution had the Party's leadership been seen in an atmosphere of poverty and simplicity like this, face-to-face with the militants of the rank and file.

Together with Chadayev, I was a member of the Party cell at the *Krassnaya Gazeta*, the big evening newspaper. (I had, of course, been removed from all committees and "responsible" positions after my return from Central Europe.) There were about 400 of us: printers, typographers, linotype operators, clerks, editorial staff, and political activists attached to the paper. Three Old Bolsheviks, lost in this multitude, occupied managerial posts. Ten or so comrades had been in the Civil War. The other 387 (or thereabouts) were from the "Lenin enrollment": workers who had joined the Party only at the death of Lenin, after the consolidation of power and at the height of NEP. We Oppositionists numbered five, one of whom was shaky; we were all of the Civil War generation. It was a miniature of the situation in the Party as a whole; many things are explained thereby.

The battle of ideas was joined on three issues, on which the maximum possible silence was maintained: agricultural system, Party democracy, Chinese Revolution. Chiang Kai-shek, with Blücher (Galen)* and my comrade Olgin (lately one of the victors at Bokhara) as his counselors, was beginning his triumphal march from Canton to Shanghai and winning startling victories on the way; the Chinese Revolution was in its ascendancy. From the very beginning the discussion in the whole Party was falsified, on orders from the bureaucracy. The cell committee, in obedience to the district committee, called an aggregate meeting every fortnight. Attendance was compulsory and all names were checked off at the door. A hack orator took two hours to prove the possibility of constructing Socialism in a single country and denounce the Opposition's "lack of faith." All he did was to spin out the statements published by the Central Committee's Agitation Department. The next to speak were those termed the "activists," always the same ones, long-winded old workers who were favorites of the committee or eager young careerists who were actually offering themselves as eligible candidates for a minor position. I can

still hear a young soldier expounding painfully from the platform how Marx and Engels doubtless did not conceive of one of the "little Western countries," like France, Britain, or Germany, being able to build Socialism out of its own resources—but the USSR constituted a sixth of the world...

The Bureau, which consisted of workers loyal to the management, was always keen to have a long list of speakers, both to limit the time available for Oppositionists to speak and to give statistical proof of the participation of the masses in the life of the Party. Of the Oppositionists, three were lying low; Chadayev and myself were the only ones to go to the platform, and we were allowed five minutes. It was essential not to lose a second of the time, and accordingly we had invented a special style. We spoke in detached sentences that were all either declarations, statements of fact, or questions. Each one of them had to register, even if the shouting of the "activists" drowned what came before. As soon as we opened our mouths to speak, interruptions and shouts, mingled with insults, would burst out at once: "*Traitors! Mensheviks! Tools of the bourgeoisie!*" One had to stay calm, remark to the chairman that half a minute had been lost by interruptions, and start the mangled sentence over again. Somebody, a member of the Bureau, would be taking down hurried notes for the benefit of the City Committee and the Central Committee. The body of the hall watched this duel in absolute silence. Twenty of the onlookers filled the place with their shouts; we only had them to face, and were troubled by the silence of the others.

The Chinese Revolution galvanized us all. I have the feeling of a positive wave of enthusiasm stirring up the whole Soviet world—or at least the thinking part of it. The country felt, however confusedly, that a Red China could be the salvation of the USSR. Then came the Shanghai fiasco. I was expecting it; I had stated beforehand that it would happen. In Moscow I took part in the International Commission set up by the Oppositional Center, together with Zinoviev's spokesman Kharitonov, Fritz Wolf (who soon capitulated, which did not stop him being shot in 1937), Andrés Nin, the Bulgarian Lebedev (or Stepanov, a clandestine Oppositionist who betrayed us and later worked as a Comintern agent during the revolution in Spain), and

two or three other militants whose names I have forgotten. I was well briefed by comrades who had come back from China and by material from Radek (then Rector of the Chinese University in Moscow), Zinoviev, and Trotsky. Incredibly enough, the only non-Communist French newspaper that came into the USSR, *Le Temps*, a Conservative organ but reputable (money having no smell, as they say), provided me with valuable points of confirmation.

When he arrived before Shanghai, Chiang Kai-shek had found the town in the hands of the trade unions, whose rebellion had been superlatively organized with the assistance of the Russian agents. Day by day we followed the preparation of the military coup, whose only possible outcome was the massacre of the Shanghai proletariat. Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Radek demanded an immediate change of line from the Central Committee. It would have been enough to send the Shanghai Committee a telegram: "Defend yourselves if you have to!" and the Chinese Revolution would not have been beheaded. One divisional commander put his troops at the disposal of the Communist Party to resist the disarmament of the workers. But the Politburo insisted on the subordination of the Communist Party to the Kuomintang. The Chinese Party, led by an honest man, Ch'en Tu-Hsiu, had disavowed the peasant uprisings in Hopei and left the insurgent farmers of Chan-Sha to be slaughtered in their thousands.

On the very day before the Shanghai incident Stalin came to the Bolshoi Theater to explain his policy to the assembled activists of Moscow. The whole Party noted one of his winged remarks: "We are told that Chiang Kai-shek is making ready to turn against us again. I know that he is playing a cunning game with us, but it is he that will be crushed. We shall squeeze him like a lemon and then be rid of him."

This speech was in the press at *Pravda* when we heard the terrible news. Troops were wiping out the working-class quarters of Shanghai with saber and machine gun. (Malraux was later to describe this tragedy in *Man's Estate*.)

Despair was in us all when we met. The arguments within the Central Committee were repeated with equal violence in every Party cell where there were Oppositionists. When I began to speak in my own branch, just after Chadayev, I felt that a paroxysm of hatred was

building up and that we would be lynched on the way out. I ended my five minutes by flinging out a sentence that brought an icy silence: "The prestige of the General Secretary is infinitely more precious to him than the blood of the Chinese proletariat!" The hysterical section of the audience exploded: "Enemies of the Party!"

A few days later our first arrest took place: they arrested Nechayev, a new member of our Center, a thoughtful worker who had once been an army commissar, with a rough, weary face and gold spectacles, about forty years of age. We spoke of the arrest at a meeting. The Bureau did not dare to accept any responsibility for it. We had prepared two angry interventions: Chadayev made his from the platform, but I spoke from the floor, the better to defy the fanatics in the front rows. I shouted, "You have arrested Nechayev. Tomorrow you will have to arrest us in thousands. Know then that in the service of the working class we will accept prison, deportation, the Solovky Isles. Nothing will silence us. The counterrevolution is rising behind you, stranglers of the Party!" The activists kept up bursts of rhythmic chanting: "*Slanderers! Traitors!*" These arguments were conducted in a hall where we suddenly felt, members of the same Party as we were, that the enemy was in front of us and prison was a step away; it had a shattering effect upon me.

On one other occasion we scored a point—but what a dismal point it was! I asked the audience to stand in homage to the memory of Adolf Abramovich Joffe; I had just kept watch by him as he lay on his deathbed in Moscow, dead for the Revolution's sake. The cell Secretary, who was always briefed by a confidential circular, gazed at us in fury, but yielded. We rendered homage, since the circular did not expressly forbid that . . .

"And now, tell us why he died, and how!"

"The district committee has given me no information on those points," answered the Secretary, adding that nobody had the right to speak on those points before the Central Committee did so. In the memoranda that passed from committee to committee, a death like this could disappear without trace. On this sacrifice the newspapers were silent; it was being squeezed into nothing under half a ton of paper.

We began to tire of this sterile battling in a low-level organization.

Once, as Chadayev and I were walking along there in the rainy street, we looked at each other, each with the same thought in his eyes: "What if we kept quiet this evening?" I forget now what was being discussed. After the activists had finished haranguing us, the Chairman announced, in a puzzled voice, that the list of speakers had no more names. Then, for the first time, the apathetic audience stirred. There was a flurrying all around us: "Hey, what about you chaps?" Chadayev rose smiling and I saw him, looking very tall, and putting up his hand to ask to speak.

And this time, when it came to the vote on the final motion, when we were always the only ones to vote against—against 250 others—a third hand was raised at the same time as ours. A young printer was exclaiming: "They're right! I am with them!" He joined us in the street. We learnt that about forty workers, all bound by mutual confidence, were prepared to support us, but would only do so discreetly, for fear of losing their jobs. An equal number of sympathizers were around them. We went home in the darkness, tense but happy. The ice was beginning to break. From other sources we discovered that the same situation held in the Party as a whole.

"I think," Chadayev said to me, "that they'll crush us to pulp before the big thaw ever happens."

Now that Zinoviev had been dismissed from the Chairmanship of the Leningrad Soviet, he had not been in the city for months. He came along there with Trotsky for a session of the Central Soviet Executive, which of course was a purely formal gathering. Gray drizzle was falling over the stands decked in red calico, and on the demonstration marching past near the Tauride Palace. The leaders of the Opposition were standing on the platform well away from the official group. The crowd had eyes only for them. After delivering hurrahs to order before Komarov, the new Chairman of the Soviet, the procession found itself level with these legendary men who no longer meant anything in the State. At this point the demonstrators made a silent gesture by lingering on the spot, and thousands of hands were outstretched, waving handkerchiefs or caps. It was a dumb acclamation, futile but still overwhelming.

Zinoviev and Trotsky received the greeting in a spirit of happy

determination, imagining that they were witnessing a show of force. "The masses are with us!" they kept saying that night. Yet what possibilities were there in masses who were so submissive that they contained their emotions like this? As a matter of fact everybody in that crowd knew that the slightest gesture endangered his own and his family's livelihood.

Together with the two leaders we conducted a campaign of agitation, a legal one that is: the Party rules did not forbid members of the Central Committee to talk to militants. Fifty people packed a small room, sitting around a pale, plump Zinoviev, him of the curls and the low voice. At the other end of the table sat Trotsky, now obviously aging, almost hoary but well set, his features boldly chiseled, ever ready with a shrewd answer. A woman worker, sitting cross-legged on the floor, asked: "What if we are expelled?" Trotsky explained that "nothing can really cut us off from our Party." And Zinoviev demonstrated that we were entering a period of struggles when around the party there would be expelled and semi-expelled members more worthy of the name of Bolsheviks than the Party secretaries. Volunteers kept a watch on the forecourts and surrounds as the GPU might decide to intervene at any moment. It was a simple, reassuring sight: the men of the proletarian dictatorship, who had yesterday been the greatest in the land, coming back like this to the districts of the poor, there to seek support from man to man.

I was with Trotsky as he left one of these meetings in some ramshackle apartment scarred by poverty. In the street Leon Davidovich put up his overcoat collar and lowered the peak of his cap so as not to be recognized. He looked like an old intellectual in the underground of long ago, true as ever after twenty years of grind and a few dazzling victories. We approached a cabman and I bargained for the fare, for we had little money. The cabman, a bearded peasant straight out of old Russia, leaned down and said, "For you, the fare is nothing. Get inside, comrade. You are Trotsky, aren't you?" The cap was not enough of a disguise for the man of the Revolution. The Old Man had a slight smile of amusement: "Don't tell anyone that this happened. Everybody knows that cabmen belong to the petty bourgeoisie, whose favor can only discredit us . . ."

One evening, at Alexandra Bronstein's, he spoke about the sailor Markin, a true hero who fell in 1918 near the Volga. "It's the Markins who made the Russian Revolution . . ." We were discussing the seven-hour day decreed by the Executive, on the orders of Stalin, Rykov, and Bukharin, to trump the demands of the Opposition. We were against it. We thought it better to increase salaries by one-eighth. What's the point of dubious leisure time when there's vodka, low wages, and overcrowded slums? Olga Grigorievna Livchitz, longtime comrade of Lenin, a slight woman, bespectacled, extremely erudite and kind, came in carrying a lengthy memo cataloguing the "opportunist errors" of the Opposition on the Chinese question. "Thank you," said the Old Man. "I'll do my best to respond . . ."

Using assumed names, I spoke in outlying districts. One of my groups, consisting of half a dozen working men and women, held its meetings in the shade of low fir trees in an abandoned cemetery. I would stand on the graves and discuss the confidential reports of the Central Committee, the news from China, and Mao Tse-tung's articles. (The future military leader of Soviet China was very close to us in his ideas, but he stayed within the Party line to keep his supplies of weapons and munitions.)

I had no confidence that we would win: I was even sure in my own heart that we would be defeated. I remember saying this to Trotsky, in his big office at the Concessions Commission. In the old capital we could count on only a few hundred militants, and the mass of the workers was indifferent to our case. People wanted to be left in peace. I sensed the Old Man thought as I did, but we had to carry out our duty as revolutionaries. If defeat was inevitable, what was to be done other than accept it with courage? To meet it head-on, unbowed? That would be useful for the future. Leon Davidovich spread his hands wide: "There is always some risk to be run. Sometimes you finish like Liebknecht and sometimes like Lenin." As far as I was concerned everything was summed up in one conviction: even if there were only one chance in a hundred for the regeneration of the Revolution and its workers' democracy, that chance had to be taken at all costs. I was unable to confess these sentiments openly to anyone. To the comrades who, under the firs in the cemetery, or on a waste plot

near a hospital, or in poverty-stricken houses, demanded some promise of victory from me, I would answer that the struggle would be prolonged and harsh. So long as I confined this way of talking to personal conversations with a few people, it worked, it made their faces harden, but if it was used against a more numerous audience, it cast a chill. "You behave too much like an intellectual," I was told by one of my friends in our Center. Other agitators were lavish with promises of victory and I think that they themselves lived on such hopes.

We decided to use surprise tactics to occupy a hall in the Palace of Labor, where we would hold a big meeting with Zinoviev. (Kamenev had done this at Moscow, speaking by the glow of a few candles since the Central Committee had had the electricity cut off.) At the last minute Zinoviev cried off, afraid of being called to account, and Radek refused to speak by himself. So the hundred-odd of us went off to demonstrate at an engineers' conference at the Mariinsky Theater. One of us was badly beaten.

Our Center held a meeting at my lodgings with Radek, around the tea table. Karl Bernardovich munched his pipe between his thick lips; his eyes were very tired. As usual he gave an impression of extreme intelligence that was, at first encounter, disagreeable because of a certain flippancy, but beneath the sarcastic retailer of anecdotes, the man of principle shone through. Somebody had recalled the Workers' Opposition, which in 1920–21 had analyzed the bureaucratization of the Party and the condition of the working class in terms that we scarcely dared repeat aloud seven years later. At the idea that this bygone Opposition had been right against Lenin, Radek was nettled. "A dangerous idea. If you take it up, you will be finished as far as we are concerned. In 1920 there was no Thermidor in sight, Lenin was alive, and the revolution was simmering in Europe..."

I questioned him about Dzerzhinsky, who had just died, on the couch where he had collapsed with a heart attack on the way out of a stormy session of the Central Committee. Nobody doubted Dzerzhinsky's absolute incorruptibility. The petty deceit that had become current among our leadership must have made him ill...

Radek remarked, "Felix died just in time. He was a dogmatist. He

would not have shrunk from reddening his hands in our blood." At midnight the telephone rang: "Scatter, look sharp! You're all going to get locked up, the orders have been given by Messing!" Everyone dispersed unhurriedly. Radek lit his pipe again. "Plenty of things are going to start happening again. The main job is not to do anything silly."

The Central Committee authorized the "activists" to break up "illegal meetings" by force. Squads of husky fellows, ready to beat up anyone on behalf of the Central Committee, were formed in the various districts of the city, and provided with lorries. Concerned for its dignity, the Opposition recoiled from the prospect of fistfighting; meetings were stopped or else held in absolute secrecy.

For some years now the country had been living on political formulae, many of which were obsolete and some downright deceitful. The Opposition decided to give itself a program, thereby proclaiming that the ruling party now had either no program or else one that no longer had anything to do with the Revolution. Zinoviev undertook to work out the chapters on agriculture and the International in collaboration with Kamenev; the chapter on industrialization was assigned to Trotsky; Smilga and Piatakov, helped by some young comrades, also worked on the draft, which was submitted, as each section came out, to our meetings and, wherever possible, to groups of workers. For the last time (but we had no suspicion that this was so) the Party returned to its tradition of collective thinking, with its concern to consult the man in the workshop. Typewriters clattered throughout entire nights in apartments where the Kremlin was still unable to intrude. The daughter of Vorovsky, the Ambassador who had been assassinated in Switzerland, wore herself out in this work (she was soon to die of the combined effects of tuberculosis, work, and privation). Some of the comrades got three or four typewriters together in a little room in Moscow. Agents of the GPU besieged these premises quite openly. One of the Red Army leaders, Okhotnikov, came complete with the tabs on his collar and ordered this surveillance to be called off; we were able to save some of our stocks. The next day the newspapers announced the discovery of a "clandestine printing press"! A further crime: a former White officer was implicated in

the plot—and this was partly true, except that the ex-officer was now a member of the GPU. For the first time a squalid police intrigue was interfering with the life of the Party.

This odious legend was automatically publicized by the Communist press abroad. Vaillant-Couturier put his name to the official statement. A few days later I met him in Moscow at an international writers' conference. I pushed away the hand he offered me. "You know perfectly well that you have given your signature to a slander!" His large chubby face grew pale and he stammered, "Come along this evening and I'll explain to you. I received the official reports. How could I check if they were true?" That night I knocked on his door, in vain. I will never forget his face, helpless with shame. For the first time I witnessed the self-debasement of a man who wanted to be a sincere revolutionary—who was, moreover, talented, eloquent, sensitive, and (physically at least) courageous. They got him in a corner: "You must write that, Vaillant; the Executive demands it!" Refusal meant breaking with the all-powerful Comintern that could make and break reputations, meant joining a minority without a press or resources . . . He would more willingly have risked his neck on the barricades, than his Parliamentary career in this particular way. Besides, shame makes its impact only the first time.

All legal means of expression were now closed to us. From 1926 onward, when the last tiny sheets put out by anarchists, syndicalists, and Maximalists had disappeared, the Central Committee had enjoyed an absolute monopoly of printed matter. Fishelev, an old companion of Trotsky in Canada and now the manager of a printshop in Leningrad, published our *Platform* clandestinely; it was signed by seventeen members of the Central Committee (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smilga, Yevdokimov, Rakovsky, Piatakov, Bakayev, etc.). Fishelev was convicted of misappropriating paper and plant, and sent to a concentration camp in the Solovetsky Islands. Meanwhile we collected signatures to the *Platform*. "If we get thirty thousand of them," said Zinoviev, "they won't be able to stop us speaking at the Fifteenth Congress . . ." We managed, with considerable difficulty, to gather five or six thousand. Since the situation was taking a rapid turn for the worse, only a few hundred, the names of the men of the Bolshevik Old

Guard, were sent to the Central Committee. Events were speeding to a conclusion that would make all this petitioning appear in its true light: childish gestures.

The 100 pages of the *Platform* attacked the anti-Socialist forces that were growing under the NEP system, embodied in the kulak or rich peasant, the trader, and the bureaucrat. Increase in indirect taxation, bearing heavily on the masses; real wages held static at an excessively low level, barely that of 1913; two million unemployed; trade unions fast becoming executive organs of the employer-State (we demanded the preservation of the right to strike); thirty to forty percent of the peasantry poor and without horses or implements, and a rich six percent holding fifty-three percent of the corn reserves. We advocated tax exemption for poor peasants, the development of collective cultivation (kolkhozes), and a progressive tax system. We also advocated a powerful drive for technological renewal and the creation of new industries, and mercilessly criticized what was the first, pitifully weak version of the Five-Year Plan. The funds for industrialization should be raised from private capital (between 150 and 200 million rubles), from the kulaks' reserves (150 to 200 million rubles?), from savings, from exports. On the other hand, we demanded the abolition of the State alcohol trade, which brought in a considerable revenue. We quoted Lenin's saying: "We will sell everything, except ikons and vodka."

On the political level, it was essential to restore life to the Soviets, to apply the principle of self-determination of nationalities "in sincerity," and above all to revitalize the Party and the trade unions. The "Party of the proletariat" was only one-third working class (no more than that) in its composition: 430,000 workers compared with 465,000 officials; 303,000 peasants (over half of whom were rural officials), and 15,000 agricultural day laborers. We disclosed that two tendencies existed within the Central Committee. One of these, the moderate one, envisaged the formation of a rich peasant petty bourgeoisie; this Right tendency was quite capable of precipitating an involuntary slide towards capitalism. It comprised Rykov (Chairman of the Council of Trade Unions), Kalinin (President of the Executive of the USSR), Chubar (Chairman of the Ukrainian Council of People's

Commissars), Petrovsky (Chairman of the Ukrainian Soviet Executive), and Melnichansky and Dogadov, of the Council of Trade Unions. (With the exception of Kalinin and Voroshilov, all these men were to perish in 1937–38.)

"Centrist" was our designation of the Stalin tendency (Molotov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Kirov,* Uglanov), because its only apparent motive was the preservation of power, to which end it would resort by turns to the policies of the Right and of the Opposition. Bukharin was unstable and drifted between the two. (In fact he belonged to the Right.) The Central Committee replied to this "foul slander" by stating that "never, even while Lenin was alive, had it been so perfectly unanimous" (I quote verbatim). In conclusion, the Opposition openly demanded a Congress for the reform of the Party, and the implementation of the excellent resolutions on internal democracy that had been adopted in 1921 and 1923. The *Platform*, of course, fiercely criticized the policies of the Comintern, which in China were resulting in an uninterrupted series of bloody disasters.

By a significant coincidence of dates, the Soviet Thermidor was realized in November 1927, the anniversary of the seizure of power. In ten years the exhausted Revolution had turned full circle against itself. On 7 November 1917 Trotsky, Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, organized the victorious insurrection. On the second day of November 1927 *Pravda* published the report of his latest speech, delivered in October to the Central Committee beneath a hail of shouting. While he was speaking from the rostrum, protected on all sides by a human rampart, he was constantly overwhelmed by gross insults, duly recorded by the shorthand writers, from Skrypnik, Chubar, Unschlicht, Goloschekin, Lomov, and several others who, well-fleshed as they might be, did not suspect that they were really no more than the restless ghosts of future victims of suicide and firing squad: "Menshevik! Traitor! Scoundrel! Liberal! Liar! Scum! Despicable phrasemonger! Renegade! Villain!" Yaroslavsky threw a heavy book at his head. Yevdokimov rolled up his sleeves like the old worker he was, ready to take on a fight. Trotsky's voice, intolerable, sarcastic, beat on: "Your books are unreadable nowadays, but they are still useful for knocking people down . . ."

Pravda reported: "*The speaker*: Behind the bureaucrats stand the renascent bourgeoisie... (*Commotion. Cries of* Enough!) *Voroshilov:* Enough! Shame! (*Whistling. Uproar. The speaker can no longer be heard. The Chairman waves his bell. Whistles. Shouts:* Get off the platform! *Comrade Trotsky continues to read, but not a single word can be distinguished. The members of the Central Committee begin to leave.*)"

Zinoviev left the rostrum overwhelmed by boos after saying: "Either you will reconcile yourselves to letting us speak to the Party or you will have to imprison us all... (*laughter*)." Did these revilers believe what they were shouting? They were mostly sincere men, narrow-minded and zealous. These uncultured upstarts of the Revolution's victory justified their sharp practices and privileges by reference to their service to Socialism. Outraged by the Opposition, they saw it as treason against them, which in a sense it was, since the Opposition itself belonged to the ruling bureaucracy.

We decided to take part in the November demonstrations under our own slogans. In Leningrad, adroit marshals allowed the Oppositionists to march past the official dais under the windows of the Winter Palace, before penning them back between the caryatid statues of the Hermitage Museum and the Archives building. I ran foul of several barriers, and was unable to join the procession. I stopped for a moment to survey the multitude of poor folk carrying their red flags. From time to time an organizer turned back to his group and raised a hurrah that found a halfhearted chorus in echo. I went a few paces nearer the procession and shouted likewise—alone, with a woman and child a few steps behind me. I had flung out the names of Trotsky and Zinoviev; they were received by an astonished silence. From the procession an organizer, roused from his sluggishness, answered in a spiteful tone: "—to the dustbin!" No one echoed him, but all at once I had the very distinct impression that I was about to be lynched. Burly characters sprang up from nowhere and eyed me up and down, a little hesitant because after all I might be some high functionary. A student walked across the clear space that had arisen all around me and came to whisper in my ear, "Let's be off, it might take a turn for the worse. I'll go with you so that you won't be hit from behind." I knew that all that was needed was a proclamation, in the public

square of a civilized town, that a man could be struck with impunity, and instantaneously all the suppressed violence would converge on his head. Taking a detour, I tried to rejoin my comrades.

On the bridge at Khalturin Street (once the Millionaya) mounted militiamen were holding back groups of onlookers. A good-natured disturbance was flaring up round the legs of the gray granite statues that support the Hermitage portico. Several hundred Oppositionists were there engaged in fraternal battle against the militia. The horses' breasts were constantly pushing back the crowd, but the same human wave returned to meet them, led by a tall, beardless, open-faced soldier, Bakayev, the former head of our Cheka. I also saw Lashevich, big and thickset, who had commanded armies, throwing himself, together with several workers, on a militiaman, dragging him from the saddle, knocking him down, and then helping him to his feet while addressing him in his commander's voice: "How is it that you are not ashamed to charge at the workers of Leningrad?" Around him billowed his soldier's cloak, bare of insignia. His rough face, like that of some drinker painted by Franz Hals, was crimson red. The brawl went on for a long time. Around the tumultuous group, of which I was part, a stupefied silence reigned.

That evening we held a meeting attended by Bakayev and Lashevich, whose uniforms were torn. Excited voices exclaimed, "We'll stand and fight!" "Who against?" others asked heatedly. "Against our own people?" At home my son, seven years old, hearing all the talk of fights, charges, and arrests, was most disturbed: "What's happening, Daddy? Have the capitalists and Fascists come here?" For he already knew that Communists never got charged in the street except by capitalists or Fascist police. How could I explain to him? The newspapers accused us of fomenting an insurrection.

On 16 November the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee was published: this ensured that they would be unable to speak at the forthcoming Congress. Zinoviev, in his small apartment in the Kremlin, feigned a supreme tranquillity. At his side, covered by glass, lay a death mask: Lenin's head lying abandoned on a cushion. Why, I asked, had not copies of so poignant a mask been widely distributed? Because its expression held too much in the way of

grief and mortality; considerations of propaganda compelled a preference for bronzes with uplifted hands. Zinoviev told me that he was about to be evicted, since only Central Committee members had the right to live in the Kremlin. He left the place, taking with him the death mask of old Ilyich.

Trotsky had slipped past the watchers on his tail, and moved house quietly; for a whole day the GPU and the Politburo, seized by a comical fright, had asked each other what plots he was up to. He was at Beloborodov's, in the House of the Soviets on Cheremetievsky Street. I found Radek, too, in the Kremlin but being ordered out of it, in the process of sorting and destroying his papers, which were scattered in the middle of a deluge of old books heaped in confusion over the carpets. "I'm selling all this for buttons," he told me, "and then I'm clearing out. We've been absolute idiots! We haven't a penny, when we could have kept back some pretty spoils of war for ourselves! Today, lack of money is killing us off. We with our celebrated revolutionary honesty, we've just been overscrupulous sods of intellectuals." Then, without a pause, as though it were about the most commonplace matter: "Joffe killed himself tonight. He left a political testament addressed to Leon Davidovich, which the GPU of course stole in a flash. But I got there in time, and I've fixed a nice scandal for them abroad if they don't give it back." (Officialdom maintained that all the papers of any top-rank militant belonged, once he was dead, to the Central Committee.) Radek deplored the fact that we had broken, on Trotsky's advice, with the Group of Fifteen (Sapronov and Vladimir Smirnov), which believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat had been replaced by a bureaucratic police regime. "They exaggerate a bit; they're not as wrong as all that, maybe, don't you agree?" "Quite," I said. Kamenev and Sokolnikov dropped in. This was the last time that I met Kamenev, and I was surprised to see that his beard had become all white: a handsome old man with unclouded eyes. "Would you like some books?" Radek asked me. "Take away whatever you like. It's all being cleared out." As a souvenir of that day, I took away a volume of Goethe bound in red leather: *The West-Eastern Divan*.

Joffe lay outstretched on a large table in the office where he had worked in Leontievsky Street. A portrait of Lenin, larger than life-size

and with an enormous forehead, dominated the room, hanging just above the bureau at which the old revolutionary had written the last pages—wonderful pages—expressing his convictions. He slept, his hands placed together, his forehead bare, his graying beard neatly combed. His eyelids were tinged with blue, his lips dark. In the small black-edged hole in his temple, someone had stuffed a plug of cotton wool. Forty-seven years—prisons, the revolt of the fleet in 1905, Siberia, escapes, exile, Congresses, Brest-Litovsk, the German Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, embassies, Tokyo, Vienna... Nearby, in a little room full of children's toys, Maria Mikhailovna Joffe, her face dry and burning, talked to some of the comrades in a low voice. Since the correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, Paul Scheffer, had revealed the existence of Joffe's political testament, the Central Committee consented to release a copy to its intended recipient, Trotsky.

Joffe had, now that his mind was made up, written at great length. First he affirmed his right to commit suicide: "All my life I have been of the opinion that the political man has the duty to depart at the right time... having most assuredly the right to abandon life at that moment when he is aware that he can no longer be useful to the cause which he has served... Thirty years ago, I adopted the philosophy that human life has no meaning except insofar as it exists in the service of something infinite—which for us is humanity. Since anything else is limited, to work for the sake of anything else is devoid of meaning..." There followed a reasoned affirmation of faith, so great that it went beyond reason itself, appearing almost puerile: "Even if humanity should have an end, this end will be in an epoch so distant that for us humanity should be considered as an absolute infinity. And if like me one believes in progress, one can well imagine that, with the disappearance of our planet, humanity will be able to find another, younger one to inhabit [...]. In this way, all that has been accomplished for its benefit in our time will find reflection in centuries to come..." The man who wrote these lines, prepared to seal them with his own blood, here touched on heights of faith where neither reason nor unreason counts any longer: there has been no better expression of the revolutionary's communion with all mankind in all ages.

"My death is a gesture of protest against those who have reduced

the Party to such a condition that it is totally incapable of reacting against this disgrace" (the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee). "Perhaps these two events, the great one and the little" (Joffe's own suicide) "in occurring together, will reawaken the Party and halt it on the path that leads to Thermidor... I should be happy to think so, for then I would know that my death was not in vain. But, though I have the conviction that the hour of awakening will sound one day for the Party, I cannot believe that it has already sounded. In the meantime, I have no doubt that today my death is more useful than the prolongation of my life."

Joffe addressed certain friendly criticisms to Trotsky, exhorted him to intransigence against orthodox Leninism, authorized him to make changes in the text of the letter before publishing it, and entrusted him with the care of his widow and child. "I embrace you firmly. Farewell. Moscow, 16 November 1927. Yours, A. A. Joffe."

The letter signed, the envelope closed and placed in full view on the writing table. Brief meditation: wife, child, city; the huge eternal universe; and myself about to go. The men of the French Revolution used to say: Death is an everlasting sleep... Now to do quickly and well what has been irrevocably decided: press the automatic comfortably against the temple, there will be a shock and no pain at all. Shock, then nothing.

The path of agitation was closed to Joffe because of his sickness. For the last time at his funeral we breathed in the salty air of times long past. The Central Committee had arranged two o'clock as the time for the departure of the procession which would accompany the body from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Novodevichy cemetery; working people would not be able to come as early as that. The comrades delayed the removal of the body for as long as they could. At about four o'clock a crowd, singing and slowly tramping through the snow, and bearing a few red flags, went down towards the Bolshoi Theater. It already numbered several thousand people. We went along Kropotkin Street, the old Ostozhenka. Long ago, on this very road, I had seen Kropotkin off to the selfsame cemetery, accompanied by quite different victims of persecution; now our own persecution was beginning, and I could not but see a secret justice in this.

Tall, aquiline profile, wearing a cap, collar of his light overcoat raised, Trotsky walked beside Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, thin and blond, still People's Commissar of Postal Services, and Christian Rakovsky. Georgian militants of imposing military appearance in their tightly belted blue overcoats escorted this group. A poor and gray cortege, free of pomp, whose soul vibrated and whose chants rang with defiance. At the approaches to the cemetery, the incidents began. Sapronov, his aged, emaciated face framed in a mane of bristling white (at the age of forty), passed along the ranks: "Keep calm, comrades, we mustn't let ourselves be provoked . . . We'll break through the barrier." A man who had organized the Moscow rising of 1917 was now organizing this painful struggle at the cemetery. We marked time for a moment in front of the high battlements of the gateway; the Central Committee had issued an order that only twenty or so persons be allowed to enter.

"Very well," replied Trotsky and Sapronov, "the coffin will go no further and the speeches will be delivered on the pavement." For a moment it looked as though violence would break out. The representatives of the Central Committee intervened, and we all went in. For one last instant the coffin floated above men's heads in the cold silence, then it was lowered into the pit. Some functionary, whose name I forget, presented official condolences from the Central Committee. Murmurs were heard: "That's enough! Why doesn't he clear off?" It was so ponderous. Rakovsky towered over the crowd, stout and smooth-shaven; his words snapped out, carrying a great distance: "*This flag—we will follow it—like you—right to the end—on your tomb—we swear it!*"

Old Russia! A tall, ornate tower, red and white, rising over the Novodievitchii convent into a clear blue sky above, its architecture ablaze. Here lie great mystics and Chekhov, rich merchants named Bukharin and Evgenia Bosch. A silver birch carries a small plaque, "Here lies P. A. Kropotkin." Opulent tombs are in granite, while on others small gilded domes rest on chapels. Later, in the time of industrialization, many of these were destroyed to use the materials for construction.

The country at large did not hear Joffe's pistol shot, and his last

message remained secret. The country knew nothing of our *Platform*, an illegal document. We had copies of these texts circulated, and the GPU came at night to search our quarters for them. The reading of either of them became an offense punished by imprisonment—in contravention of all legal procedure, be it noted. Official Russia was organizing the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution: congresses, banquets, etc. Foreign delegates, hand-picked by the Communist Party, the Friends of the USSR, and the Secret Service, poured into Moscow. Among them were two young Frenchmen, ex-Surrealists, singularly upright in character and unflinchingly acute in intelligence, Pierre Naville* and Gérard Rosenthal.* They had come with me to keep watch over Joffe's body. I took them to see Zinoviev and Trotsky. The interview with Zinoviev took place in the little apartment of Sachs-Gladnev, an old Marxist scholar who was a timid, fastidious man, myopic and bearded up to his eyes. Storks in white silk were in flight upon a Chinese tapestry. On his bookshelves, the twenty-five volumes of Lenin. The two French comrades questioned Zinoviev on the prospects for the Opposition in the International. Zinoviev said, more or less, "We are starting the Zimmerwald movement all over again. Think of Europe at war and that handful of internationalists gathered in a Swiss village; we are already stronger than they were. We have cadres practically everywhere. In our time, history moves faster..."

As we went out, Naville, Rosenthal, and I exchanged glances, all somewhat horrified by this crude approach. Did Zinoviev believe what he told us? I think so, more or less. But he had besides a second and a third set of possibilities kept in reserve, and these he did not disclose. Poor Sachs-Gladnev, our host for that day, disappeared in 1937, classified as a "terrorist."

There was not a single Oppositionist among the 1,600 delegates of the Fifteenth Party Congress; Stalin, Rykov, Bukharin, and Ordzhonikidze waxed eloquent on the theme of uninterrupted success in all fields. Bukharin denounced the crime of Trotskyism, which was preparing the establishment of a second party. Behind this second party all those who hated the regime would rally, and so the split would lead to the undermining of the dictatorship of the proletariat,

and the Opposition would be no more than the spearhead of that hidden "third force" reaction. The Opposition greatly feared this mode of reasoning, whose accuracy it admitted, and sent the Congress yet another message expressing its loyalty in spite of all. The idea that the "third force" was already organized in the heart of the ruling bureaucracy had occurred only to an unknown young comrade named Ossovsky, who was disowned by everybody.

The Central Committee knew what was going on inside the Opposition. The Leningrad tendency, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, and Bakayev, favored capitulation. "They want to hound us from the Party; we have to stay in it at all costs. Expulsion means political death, deportation, the impossibility of intervening when the coming crisis of the regime begins... Nothing can be done outside the Party. Humiliations are of small account to us." Kamenev and Zinoviev, themselves builders of the system, realized the power of the bureaucratic machine outside which nothing could live, but they failed to see the nature of the transformation that had been accomplished within this machine, which was henceforth destined to crush all vital initiative not only outside but also within the ruling Party.

The Oppositional Center sat in ceaseless debate throughout the Congress. Our Leningrad allies finally proposed: "Let us throw ourselves on their mercy and drink the cup of humiliation." The following exchange of replies took place between Zinoviev and Trotsky, on slips of paper passed from hand to hand. Zinoviev: "Leon Davidovich, the hour has come when we should have the courage to capitulate..." Trotsky: "If that kind of courage were enough, the revolution would have been won all over the world by now..."

The Fifteenth Congress decreed the expulsion of the Opposition, which it termed a Menshevik or a Social-Democratic deviation. Kamenev, who had just asked from the rostrum, in crushed tones, "Is it to be demanded that we forswear our convictions overnight?" now spoke again to say, "We submit unreservedly to the decisions of the Congress, painful as they may be for us." They had got rid of Trotsky: what a relief! Bukharin, inexhaustibly sprightly and mocking, used an impressive phrase: "The iron curtain of History was falling, and you got out of its way in the nick of time..."

Iron curtain indeed, and even guillotine, but so much was not yet obvious. Rykov announced that the Party would be pitiless in the use of repressive measures against those who were expelled. Thus, in a single blow, Soviet legality was liquidated and freedom of expression received its deathblow. We saw the capitulation of Zinoviev and Kamenev as political suicide, doubly so because of their wretched recantation. Rakovsky, Radek, and Muralov for the last time affirmed the unshakable loyalty of the expellees to their Party. And in this ecstasy of loyalty the split achieved its consummation.

Expulsion from the Party, as we had repeated often enough, amounted to our "political death." How could living people, full of faith, ideas, and devotion, be turned into political corpses? There are no two ways of doing it. The general mood was still not set for harsh forms of repression. The Central Committee entered into negotiations with the most prominent of those expelled, and the local committees did the same with the less prominent. Since they declared themselves to be loyal despite everything, they were offered posts in Bashkiria, Kazakhstan, the Far East, or the Arctic. Trotsky was supposed to go off in this way, "of his own free will," to Alma-Ata, on the frontier of Chinese Turkestan. He would have nothing to do with the hypocrisy of friendly deportation, and was given an administrative sentence by the GPU under Article 58 of the Penal Code, which dealt with counterrevolutionary plotting. In order to make the business known at least to some extent in Moscow and the country as a whole, he decided to put up a resistance.

He was lodging with Beloborodov, the Bolshevik from the Urals who in 1918 had had the task of deciding the lot of the Romanov dynasty and had even lately been People's Commissar of the Interior; this was in the House of the Soviets in Granovsky (formerly Cheremetievsky) Street. It was there that I went to take leave of him, a few days before he was forcibly taken off and deported. Comrades kept watch night and day in the street and in the building itself, themselves watched by GPU agents. Motorcyclists took note of the comings and goings of any cars. I went up by a service staircase; on one floor, a doorway with guards outside: "Here it is." In the kitchen my comrade Yakovin was supervising the defense arrangements and at the same

time drafting a document. The Old Man received me in a little room facing the yard, in which there was only a camp bed and a table loaded with maps of all the countries of the world. He had on an indoor jacket that had seen much wear. Vigilant, majestic, his hair standing nearly white on his head, his complexion sickly, he exhaled a fierce, caged energy. In the next room the messages he had just dictated were being copied out; the dining room was used to receive the comrades who kept arriving from all corners of the country, with whom he held hasty conversations between calls to the telephone. At any moment it was possible that we would all be arrested. After arrest, what then? We did not know, but we hurried to make the best of these last hours, for they assuredly were the last.

My own conversation with Trotsky turned chiefly on the Opposition abroad, whose activity had at all costs to be expanded and articulated. The Old Man had just received from Paris the first issues of *Contre le Courant*, published by my friends Magdeleine and Maurice Paz,* with my cooperation. He was pleased with the tone and tendency of this publication, and advised me to leave, illegally if necessary, for France, in order to work on the spot. For a moment we examined the possibilities. "We have begun a fight to the finish," he said, "which may last for years and require many sacrifices. I am leaving for Central Asia: you try and leave for Europe. Good luck!" We embraced one another. The lengthening shadows helped me to throw off the spies in the street. On the next day, if it was not the one after, the crowd blocked the Old Man's departure by occupying a station. The GPU made a surprise call to take him away. To make sure that there could be no lies put out about the manner of his departure, the Old Man let the political police break down the door; he refused to walk, and let himself be carried out to the car which left for a small, deserted station. I reflected that he had reached the peak of his exalted destiny. If, as we all feared, he were mysteriously assassinated, he would still be the symbol of the murdered Revolution. Alive, he would continue his struggle and his work as long as a pen remained between his fingers, a single breath in his lungs, be it in the depth of dungeons... Beyond the lucidity of his economic and political judgment, beyond the vigor of his style, this firmness at a time of moral erosion made of Trotsky

an exemplary man whose very existence, even if he were gagged, gave people confidence in humanity. Slander had no effect on his name, calumny and insult heaped on him rebounded ineffectually and ended up bestowing on him a strange new aura. He who had never been capable of forming a party—his abilities as an ideologue and organizer were totally different from those of Party secretaries—acquired, by virtue of his moral strength and of his thought, a few thousand unswerving devotees.

He had gone, vanished. *Izvestia*, in minute print, announced his deportation for "insurrectionary activities," a fantastic accusation. Eighteen months previously, a coup against the Politburo of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin would have been possible, and in our Oppositional circles we had weighed this possibility. The army and even the GPU would have plumped for Trotsky if he had wished; he was always being told this. I do not know if there were any formal deliberations on this subject among the leaders of the Left Opposition, but I do know that the question was discussed (end of 1925, beginning of 1926) and it was then that Trotsky deliberately refused power, out of respect for an unwritten law that forbade any recourse to military mutiny within a Socialist regime—for it was all too likely that power won in this way, even with the noblest intentions, would eventually finish in a military and police dictatorship, which was anti-Socialist by definition. Trotsky wrote later (in 1935): "No doubt a military coup against the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Stalin faction would have presented no difficulty and even caused no bloodshed, but its consequence would have been a speedier triumph for the very bureaucracy and Bonapartism against which the Left Opposition took its stand." Rarely has it been made more sharply obvious that the end, far from justifying the means, commands its own means, and that for the establishment of a Socialist democracy the old means of armed violence are inappropriate.

Several dozen Opposition militants were leaving for distant exiles at the same time as the official Soviet News Agency abroad was denying this very fact. Why this crude lie that would mislead the public for no more than a few weeks? Rakovsky was sent off to Astrakhan, Preobrazhensky to the Urals, Smilga to Minussinsk in Central Siberia,

Radek to North Siberia, Muralov to the Tara forests, Serebriakov, Ivan Smirnov, Sapronov, Vladimir Smirnov, Sosnovsky, and Voya Vuyovich elsewhere—where we did not know, since everything was done in secret. I had just seen Christian Rakovsky, back from the Embassy in Paris, lodging at the Sophiiskaya Naberezhnia, the hotel reserved for diplomats. In the corridors there one might run into Krestinsky with his forehead of fine ivory, grave and wary even in the way he walked, and Karakhan,* splendidly elegant however carelessly he dressed, on account of the extraordinary nobility of his features and bearing.

Rakovsky had come back from Paris penniless; without illusions and in good humor, at the age of fifty-four, he contemplated the long struggle yet to be endured. His massive, regular face expressed a composure that almost smiled. His wife was more nervous on his account. He said that Europe was entering a period of unresolved instability, on which it was necessary to wait. To someone who invited him to capitulate to the Central Committee, he replied gently: "I am getting old. Why should I blot my biography?"

Now and then I saw Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, People's Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs, in his little office on the Varvarka. A little over fifty, he was tall, upright, and gaunt, with timorous but resolute eyes, an introverted manner, and a good deal of youthfulness reflected in the gray-green gaze behind his pince-nez. When I asked him one day whether all correspondence addressed abroad was opened (postal censorship did not exist officially), he answered briskly, "All of it is. Don't trust anything to it. There's a positive factory run by the GPU in my place dealing just with that and I haven't the right to go in there." When his Ministerial portfolio was withdrawn he was quite content. "It does us all good to go back to the ranks for a time." Not having a farthing, he went to sign on at the Labor Exchange register of unemployed, in his old occupation of precision engineer. He hoped naïvely that he would soon be taken on in a factory. Some snooty little official saw this tall, graying, bright-eyed innocent bending in front of his window, and writing on the form he had to fill in, under the heading "Last Employment": "People's Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs." The Labor Exchange contacted the Central Committee, and

the GPU deported Ivan Nikitich to the Caucasian Riviera; repulsive as it was, repression was beginning mildly.

At the battle of Sviazhk in 1918, along with Trotsky and Rosengoltz, typists and engineers from the Army's special train, cooks, and telegraph operators, Ivan Smirnov had swiftly halted the routing of the Reds and the victorious offensive of the Whites under Kappel and Savinkov. On that day the newly born Republic was saved by this handful of men. Later, in 1920–21, it was Smirnov that Lenin commissioned to restore order in the chaos of Siberia and to bring Russian Asia under Soviet control. For the young generation, he was the incarnation of the idealism of the Party, devoid of gestures or fine phrases.

Deportations were very quick to follow, and in the hundreds. The revolutionaries of October 1917 had been not at all demoralized, it seemed, by their ten years of power, the last years of which had passed smoothly for the most well-known, in legations, ministries, administrative councils, and posts of command. What had seemed the bourgeoisification of smartly dressed folk was revealed as so superficial that it was with positive gaiety that they went off to rough it in the desert wastes of Central Asia and Siberia, all for the salvation of the Revolution. I felt inexpressibly reassured at the sight of their various departures. A certain number of Communists had attached themselves to the Opposition out of self-interest, believing that they saw in it the next government; experience showed that they were very few. We lost them forever, and good riddance at the first dark turning, after a few months. In their different ways, all the Oppositionists of 1927, whether they chose endless humiliation through loyalty to the Party or endless resistance through loyalty to Socialism, followed the same terrible path right to its end.

What a striking contrast it was between these men and the foreigners, whether noted writers, Communist delegates, or distinguished liberal guests, who were in Moscow at that time to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Revolution. And they actually offered us lessons in wisdom! Paul Marion (the future Undersecretary of State of Pétain's government), member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, peddled his platitudes across Moscow, enjoyed the young Russian females, and tried to convince me that we

were utopians, that he could see very clearly the failing of the Communist movement but he stayed within it because "after all it was the only power..." He was no more than a mediocre Frenchman on the make—unintelligent—who was trying mainly to get ahead. Basically: "For Sale!" Jacques Sadoul gave me a friendly lecture on the same theme. We had been friends, and had in common some pleasant and stirring memories of Russia and Germany. I loved his lively, mocking intelligence, his epicurean nonchalance, his political adroitness. The French Communist Party would not let him undertake any activity, although he could have made a first-rate Parliamentary leader. His mind and temperament were those of a moderate Socialist, but his need for good living bound him to the service of the Soviet State. Old Kalinin had just decorated him with the Order of the Red Flag, and he told me how Vaillant-Couturier, wishing to play down the importance of this honor, had proposed the simultaneous decoration of certain old Communards, some of whom, for all anyone really knew, might be old hoaxers.

"The leaders of the Opposition," he said, "will be shut up in comfortable villas on the Crimea and allowed to write tomes which nobody will read. But the rest of you, Serge—you're going to catch it!" We were having dinner at the table for foreign visitors; young Indian girls draped in dark-colored silks, who were sitting near us, caused our conversation to wander a moment. Jacques insisted, "You're going to get yourselves persecuted again, and life is so beautiful! Look at those figures, how charming they are, think how..." And so, affectionately, we parted. Jacques, bemedaled and equipped with sinecures, returned to Paris; I made ready to start all over again: prisons, hard living, etc.

Sadoul at least did not pretend to be a saint. At that time Barbusse was writing his mystical books, *Jesus* and *The Judases of Jesus*; now he was in Moscow, the guest of other Judases. I admired his *Under Fire*, and the lyricism of some pages in *Jesus* impressed me as ringing true. I found Barbusse, with whom I had had some correspondence, at the Hotel Metropole, guarded by a male interpreter-secretary (GPU) and accompanied by a very pretty female doll-secretary. I had just come from the overcrowded rooms of the outer city, from which comrades disappeared every night; I saw their wives with eyes too reddened, too

racked with anxiety for me to be disposed with indulgence towards the great official consciences from abroad on tour in our country; moreover, I knew who had been chased out of the hotel so that the great writer could be accommodated there.

Barbusse had a large, thin, pliant body, topped by a small, sallow, and sunken head, with the thin lips of a man who has known suffering. Right from the first I saw him as a quite different kind of person, concerned above all not to be involved, not to see anything that could involve him against his will, concerned above all to disguise opinions he could no longer express openly, avoiding any direct questioning, scurrying off along all conceivable tangents, his eyes vague, his slender hands inscribing curves in the air around obscure words like "stature," "profundities," "exaltation"—and all with the real aim of making himself the accomplice of the winning side! Since it was not yet clear whether the struggle had been definitively settled, he had just dedicated a book, at great length, to Trotsky, whom he did not dare to visit for fear of compromising himself. When I told him about the persecution, he pretended to have a headache, or not to hear, or to be rising to stupendous heights: "Tragic destiny of revolutions, immensities, profundities, yes...yes...Ah, my friend!" My jaw tensed as I realized that I was face-to-face with hypocrisy itself. Some days later I learnt that International Class War Prisoners Aid, then run by Helena Stassova, was devoting a considerable sum to the foundation of a "cultural" weekly in France, under the control of Barbusse. This was *Monde*. And Barbusse enrolled me in the list of cosponsors.

In the course of our struggles I had deployed my activity in two directions: in the Center at Leningrad, and in Moscow and abroad (mainly in France) through my writings. I belonged to the editorial board of *Clarté* in Paris. In this review I published my articles—under my own name—on the *Platform* of the Opposition and the Chinese Revolution. For some months these articles forecast events with an accuracy that overwhelmed even myself. The last one had been signed by a comrade on my behalf, but its contents are still transparent. During the Party Congress, on 11 and 12 December 1927, the lightning success of the Canton Commune had supervened in a manner peculiarly suited to refute the Opposition, which considered that the Chinese

Revolution had been defeated for a long time to come. The press was in raptures. *Pravda* published decrees, strikingly similar to those of the Russian Revolution, which had been promulgated by the Communist dictators of the Chinese city—behind whom, on the very spot, stood the envoys of the General Secretary of the CPSU, Lominadze and my late comrade Heinz Neumann. These were under pressure to supply the Fifteenth Congress with triumphal telegrams. Twenty-four hours later, the torch of Canton was doused in a sea of blood; the coolies who had thought they were fighting for the cause of social justice died in the thousands for the cause of an official dispatch; and the staff of the Soviet consulate, both men and women, perished by impalement. I met Preobrazhensky, who asked, "Have you written about Canton?"

"Yes, and sent it off."

"You must be mad! That could cost you several years in jail. Stop it from being published..." I changed the name under which it was signed. I was expecting to be deported anyway.[2]

At last I was summoned before the Control Commission of the Leningrad Central District, and so appeared before the Party tribunal. A dejected old worker, Karol, was the Chairman; a woman worker, a young man with spectacles, and two or three others were sitting around a red tablecloth (the Party committee was housed in the old baroque palace that had belonged to the Grand Duke Sergei). Karol did not seem particularly keen to expel me, and offered me several ways out of the mess. But he had to ask the treacherous and decisive question: "What is your attitude to the decision of the Congress pronouncing the expulsion of the Opposition?"

I answered: "In accordance with discipline, I comply with all decisions of the Party, but I regard this decision as a grave error whose consequences will be fatal if it is not speedily mended..." The woman worker in a red headscarf stood up, and said in a stupefied voice, "Comrade, did you really say an *error*? Do you think then that the Party Congress can be mistaken, and commit errors?"

I cited the example of German Social-Democracy voting for the

2. Victor Serge, *The Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution* (1927–1928).

war on 2 August 1914, with only Karl Liebknecht and Otto Ruhle voting against. This blasphemous comparison horrified the Commission. I was expelled forthwith. Vassily Nikiforovich Chadayev was called in. He likewise was expelled after a few minutes. We went out. "Here we are, political corpses . . ." "That's because there's nobody but us left alive."

A few days passed. My bell rang at about midnight. I opened the door, and understood at once (which was not difficult): a young soldier, and a young Jew in a leather outfit. They conducted a search, and made a beeline for some translations of Lenin. "You're seizing those too?" I asked ironically. "Don't joke," replied one of the pair, "we are Leninists too, you know." Perfect: we were all Leninists together.

Dawn hovered over Leningrad, in a blue like the depths of the sea, when I left the house between those two comrades, who apologized for not having a car at their disposal. "We have so much to do every night . . ." "I know," I said. My son of seven wept when I embraced him before I left, but explained to me: "Daddy, I'm not crying because I'm afraid, it's because I'm angry." I was taken to the old House of Arrest.

The fire-blackened brick shell of the old Palace of Justice vividly recalled the great days of liberation. But inside the squat masonry, little had changed over half a century. A warder explained to me that he had served there for twenty years: "I took Trotsky out for his walks after the 1905 Revolution . . ." There was still an arrogant air about him; he was ready to get back to the same job. In a corridor, during one of those waiting periods which precede incarceration, I sat next to a fine-looking young lad who recognized me and whispered in my ear: "Arnold, the Oppositionist from the Vyborg district, and B—— and C—— have been arrested." Good enough. What else could we have expected? Through the half-gloom, I clambered up iron stairways linking the different floors of the prison. At long intervals, lamps were burning in corners on the tables of the block supervisors. A door was opened for me in the dark, thick stonework, on the fifth or sixth floor. The dingy cell was already occupied by two men: a former officer, a municipal engineer accused of having sold ice from the Neva for his own profit instead of supplying it to the Soviet; and a creature of filth, babbling madness, and futile suffering, a kind of lunatic tramp who

had been arrested for vagrancy near the Catholic cemetery—he had been selling little metal crosses there. Since he was of Polish origin, he was charged with espionage. This creature with a shrunken old face never washed, and never spoke, except that he was perpetually mumbling prayers. Several times a day he knelt down to pray, banging his forehead against the side of the bed. At night a rather frightening babble would wake me, and I would see him on his knees, hands pressed together. Later a little bookkeeper came in, accused of having served in Admiral Kolchak's White Army. The examining magistrate declared that he recognized him as a White officer. It was all inhumanly grotesque.

I discovered that the prison was packed with victims, all targets for the hatred of functionaries who were obsessives, maniacs, and torturers by profession. In the never-ending twilight I read Dostoevsky once again; it had been kindly passed on to me by some harmless sectarian convicts who ran the library. The servant lads gleefully brought us soup ("bum-wash" they called it) twice a day, uneatable at first but awaited impatiently from the fourth day on. One of these lads, a strapping, fair-haired boy with a pale smile, did not appear one morning, and the others had sullen faces. We knew that the absentee had been shot during the night. He had not expected it so late; the sentence had been on him for months and he had assumed he was pardoned. They came to fetch him a little before dawn. "Say good-bye to your mates, and let's have no trouble, eh!" He was a boy from the frontier zone, charged with crossing illegally to Poland and back again. His death did not even serve as an example since it was kept secret.

A shirt maker from the Sadovaya, accused of tax evasion, was next door to us; he skipped over the parapet in the corridor, jumped into space, and found his eternal rest. Someone else near us tried to hang himself, and another to open his veins . . . We heard only faint echoes of these tragedies. Our days went by peacefully, without any particular anxiety or peevishness, since there were two of us, out of the three in the cell, to keep some sense of balance; we discussed Socialism. In my screeds to the Procurator I invoked the Constitution and Soviet law: a pretty joke.

My arrest had caused some commotion in Paris, and so was consid-

ered awkward in high circles. I had made up my mind not to agree to any recantation; they were content with an undertaking from me not to engage in any "anti-Soviet activity." It was a revolting distortion of language, for we had nothing whatever to do with anything anti-Soviet.

I shall never forget the wonderful sweetness of the young greenery along the Fontanka embankments, in the white night when I returned home after seven or eight weeks' absence. The porter of the house had explained my arrest very plausibly. "The same under the old regime," he said. "The intellectuals were always arrested like this, just before the first of May..." In Paris, Vaillant-Couturier reported in *L'Humanité* that I had been treated with the greatest possible consideration while in prison. Barbusse sent me embarrassed letters apologizing for the fact that, on learning of my arrest, he had deleted my name from the list of sponsors of *Monde*.

Chadayev, in whom Paris showed no interest, remained in jail for six months, until a personal friend who was a member of the Government got him out. Since he did not recant, his presence in Leningrad was deemed undesirable. The *Krassnaya Gazeta* sent him on an assignment to investigate the kolkhozes of the Kuban. His life was to end just when he believed that it was starting anew, in the enthusiasm of a fresh departure. We spent several hours rowing on the lake at Dietskoe Selo, among the scenery of the Imperial Park. Vassily Nikiforovich sang me the praises of prison, that benevolent retreat where a man takes stock of himself. He had his doubts about the regeneration of the Party, which many people believed to be now going on.

In the Kuban he pounced, with his writing pads, his inquisitive eyes, and his precise questions, upon all kinds of highly dubious rackets. Racket in building the harbor at Tuapse, racket in the layout of the beaches, racket in the repairing of roads, racket in the collectivization of agriculture!

"Banditry" on the dark roads intervened to discourage indiscreet investigators. On 26 August 1928, on a summer evening filled with the cicadas' song, the local authorities vigorously pressed Chadayev to go off in a carriage with a number of other passengers to the neighboring market town. It was a night journey across the steppe and the

fields of maize. A militiaman accompanied the caravan; he was the first to make himself scarce when rough voices came from out of the night: "*Stoy*! Halt!" Chadayev's carriage was the only one held back by the roadside. The coachman heard my poor Vassily arguing with the bandits: "What's the matter with you? We're all human beings. What is it?" All I ever saw of him again were some dreadful photographs: the dumdum bullets, fired from sawn-off rifles, had harrowed his face and chest monstrously. We wanted to give him a funeral in the town that he loved. Was he not a fighter of the Year Seventeen? The Leningrad Committee opposed this: was he not expelled? His murderers remained unknown, naturally. A stone with an inscription, erected on the spot where he died, was broken into fragments . . .

7.
THE YEARS OF RESISTANCE
1928–1933

THESE constituted five years of resistance waged by a solitary man—surrounded by his family, that is to say by weak creatures—against the relentless, overwhelming pressure of a totalitarian system. For his daily bread, his ration card, his lodging, his fuel in the harsh Russian winter, the individual is dependent on the Party-State, against which he is totally defenseless. And he who, in the name of freedom of opinion, stands out against the Party-State, bears the brand of "suspect" wherever he goes. The small amount of liberty that he still has left, and even his own courage (which seems quite mad), stand for him as a source of astonishment, mingled with anxiety.

The leaders of the now vanquished Opposition hoped to set up a clandestine organization strong enough to achieve rehabilitation in the Party at some future date with freedom of speech and propaganda. I did not share this illusion. I said that illegal methods would fail for two reasons: the unlimited power of the secret police would crush everything, and our own ideological and sentimental loyalty to the Party made us vulnerable both to political maneuverings and, even more, to police provocation. I declared that, rather than allow ourselves to be bundled away into illegality, we should defend, absolutely openly, our right to exist, think, and write. And we should form, also quite openly, an opposition which was completely loyal, being without any organization, but also completely intransigent. It was all purely academic, since both alternatives were equally impossible.

At the beginning of 1928, Alexandra Bronstein and myself were the only known Oppositionists in Leningrad still at liberty; in Moscow, Andrés Nin was free, but he had "resigned" from the Secretaryship of the Red International of Labor Unions, and was kept under

close watch in the Lux Hotel. His status as a foreigner saved him from imprisonment. Of the Russians, Boris Mikhailovich Eltsin, a Bolshevik since 1903 and founder member of the Party, former Chairman of the Soviet in Ekaterinberg (Sverdlovsk) in 1917, was also free because the GPU needed his presence in the capital for a while. In an effort to maintain the connections and inner life of the tiny circles of militants, old Eltsin, a sick man, confided in a young, vigorous—and invulnerable—fellow activist, one Mikhail Tverskoy, who was an agent of the GPU. Tverskoy drew up idiotic leaflets, shortly to be classed as "anti-Soviet" documents—the very purpose for which they were written. After having had the last Oppositional sympathizers in the Moscow factories arrested, he came to us in Leningrad in order, he said, to "help us reorganize." Alexandra Bronstein and I refused to receive him. Without our being able to stop him, he speedily set up a shadow organization consisting of fifty or so workers, only to have it rally noisily to the "general line" within two months, while those who resisted were thrown into jail. This police maneuver was repeated in all the working-class centers. It was made easier by the moral confusion of the Communists. Oppositionists and officials outbid each other in loyalty to the Party, the Oppositionists being by far the most sincere.

Nobody was willing to see evil in the proportions it had reached. As for the idea that the bureaucratic counterrevolution had attained power, and that a new despotic State had emerged from our own hands to crush us, and reduce the country to absolute silence—nobody, nobody in our ranks was willing to admit it. From the depths of his exile in Alma-Ata Trotsky affirmed that this system was still ours, still proletarian, still Socialist, even though sick; the Party that was excommunicating, imprisoning, and beginning to murder us remained our Party, and we still owed everything to it: we must live only for it, since only through it could we serve the Revolution. We were defeated by Party patriotism: it both provoked us to rebel and turned us against ourselves.

A joke was making the rounds: "Ivanov, is it true that you sympathize with the Opposition?" "Come off it, me? Never! I've got a wife and children!" I spent a painful quarter of an hour with a one-armed worker who came to me for advice. Should he recant? He was forty

years old, serious and passionate. His voice was choked: "I'll never change my thinking. We are so obviously right. But if the factory kicks me out, I'm finished. I'll never find work again with my one arm..." Assigned to mind a machine, he was at their mercy. He had fought at Archangel, in Poland, in Yakutia to end up like this with his stump, his children, and his conscience. What would I have done in his place? "Protect your soul," I replied, "since it's all you've got left..." The soul is not easy to protect because once you've signed, the Party demands that you come to the platform to condemn the error of your former ways, denounce your former comrades, and not just once but ten times, again and again. You could never have enough humiliation. The change in the political line of the Central Committee added the finishing touch to the ideological confusion.

Three mouths after our expulsion, the grain crisis that we had forecast broke out, endangering supplies to the towns and the army. The peasants, having paid off their taxes, now refused to deliver their grain to the State because they were not being paid enough for it. The Central Committee decreed requisitions, applying, quite improperly, Article 107 of the Penal Code on concealment of stocks. Detachments of young Communists scoured the countryside, stripping the fields of their grain, flax, tobacco, or cotton, depending on the district. Just as in the years of the Civil War, Communists were found at the roadsides with their skulls split open. The stacks of confiscated grain were set on fire. There was no fodder at all; the country folk besieged the bakeries in the towns so that they could feed their livestock with black bread bought at the regulation price.

The requisitioning was no more than an expedient. The real policy had been outlined by Molotov at the Fifteenth Party Congress: the development of collective agricultural cultivation (kolkhozes) or of State grain factories (sovkhozes). A slow development was envisaged, spread over many years, since collective agriculture could only replace piecemeal cultivation stage by stage as the State supplied the farms with the equipment that was indispensable to mechanized cultivation. But, as it was, war had been declared on the peasantry through the requisitioning. If the State confiscates the grain, what is the use of sowing? In the following spring, statistics will show that the area under

wheat has shrunk: a peasants' strike. There is only one way of forcing them: compulsory cooperatives, administered by the Communists. Will persuasion succeed? The independent farmer who has resisted the agitation, or rather coercion, turns out to be freer and better fed than his fellows. The Government draws the conclusion that collectivization must be total and abrupt. However, the folk of the soil are putting up a bitter defense. How can their resistance be broken? By expropriation and mass deportation of the rich peasants or kulaks and of any that may be classified as kulaks. This is what is called "the liquidation of the kulaks as a class."

Will it ever be known how terrible was the disorganization of agriculture that resulted? Rather than hand over their livestock to the kolkhoz, the peasants slaughter the beasts, sell the meat, and make boots out of the leather. Through the destruction of its livestock the country passes from poverty to famine. Bread cards in the cities, the black market, a slump in the ruble and in real wages. Internal passports have to be issued, to keep the skilled manpower in the factories against its will. Since total collectivization is heading towards disaster, its completion is declared when it has reached sixty-eight percent, and even then too late, in March 1930, when famine and terror are at their height.

The women came to deliver the cattle confiscated by the kolkhoz, but made a rampart of their own bodies around the beasts: "Go on, bandits, shoot!" And why should these rebels not be shot at? In White Russia, when they came to shear off the horses' hair for export, not realizing that it would kill them, the women angrily surrounded the head of the local government Golodied (shot or committed suicide in 1937) and all of a sudden lifted up their *sarafans*, under which they were naked: "Go on, bastard! Cut our hairs off, if you dare! But you won't have the horses' hair!" In a Kuban market town whose entire population was deported, the women undressed in their houses, thinking that no one would dare make them go out naked; they were driven out as they were to the cattle trucks, beaten with rifle butts. Sheboldayev of the Central Committee was in charge of the mass deportation in this region, never suspecting that, for his very enthusiasm, he would be shot in 1937. Terror reigned in the smallest hamlets.

There were more than 300 centers of peasant insurrection going on simultaneously in Soviet Eurasia.

Trainloads of deported peasants left for the icy north, the forests, the steppes, the deserts. These were whole populations, denuded of everything; the old folk starved to death in mid-journey, newborn babies were buried on the banks of the roadside, and each wilderness had its crop of little crosses of boughs or white wood. Other populations, dragging all their mean possessions on wagons, rushed towards the frontiers of Poland, Romania, and China and crossed them—by no means intact, to be sure—in spite of the machine guns. And in a long message to the Government, couched in a noble style, the population of Abkhazia pleaded for permission to emigrate to Turkey. I saw and heard so much about the tragedy of these dark years that I would need a whole book to set it down. On several occasions I traveled through famine-striken Ukraine and Georgia, severely rationed, in mourning. I stayed in the Crimea during the famine; I lived the misery and anxiety of the two capital cities, Moscow and Leningrad, in deep deprivation. How many were the victims of total collectivization, the victims of shortsightedness, of incompetence, and of totalitarian violence?

A Russian scholar, Prokopovich, made the following calculation from official Soviet statistics—at a time, be it noted, when the statisticians were being imprisoned and shot. Up to 1929 the number of peasant households grew uninterruptedly:

1928: 24.5 million households
1929: 25.8 million households

When collectivization ended in 1936, there were no more than 20.6 million households. In seven years more than five million families disappeared.

The transport system was worn down, and all plans for industrialization were turned inside out to cope with the new demands. It was, to quote Boris Souvarine's expression, "the anarchy of the plan." Agricultural technicians and experts were brave in denouncing the blunders and excesses; they were arrested in the thousands and made to appear in huge sabotage trials so that responsibility might be unloaded

onto somebody. The ruble was in the process of disappearing; hoarders of silver coin were shot (1930). Crisis in the coal industry, the Shakhty sabotage trial, fifty-three technicians in court, executions. Naturally there is a meat shortage: execution of Professor Karatygin and his forty-seven codefendants for sabotage of the meat supply—an execution without trial. On the day of the massacre of these forty-eight men, Moscow received Rabindranath Tagore; there were speeches about abundance and the new humanism, and a splendid official reception. In November 1930 there was the trial of the "Industrial Party": Ramzin, the engineer and agent provocateur, who was pardoned, confessed to being its leader and to plotting military intervention against the Soviet Union in London, Paris, and Warsaw. It was raving madness, and five were shot.

During the same period a "Peasant Party," including professors Makarov and Kondratiev, who were opposed to total collectivization, was liquidated offstage. There was the lunatic trial of the old Socialists (of Menshevik inclinations) in the Planning Commission: Groman,* Ginsberg, the historian Sukhanov, Rubin, and Sher. There was the secret trial of the officials of the Finance Commissariat, Yurovsky and others. There was the secret trial of bacteriologists, several of whom died in prison. There was the execution of the thirty-five leading figures in the Commissariat of Agriculture—among them several noted Old Communists (Konar, Wolfe, the People's Vice-Commissar, and Kovarsky). There was the secret trial of physicists and the deportation of Academician Lazarev. There was the secret trial of the historians Tarle, Platonov, and Kareyev...

In these pages of memories, I am unable to provide a full account of the events and the frightful atmosphere in which they unfolded. I knew intellectuals of all kinds and was on friendly terms with many of the accused and disappeared. I will limit myself to a few facts:

—The accusation of sabotage, which was directed at thousands, or rather tens of thousands, of technicians, was in general a monstrous slander, justified solely by the need to find culprits for an economic situation that was now insupportable. Close examination of a whole number of cases proves this irrefutably, apart from the fact that the patriotism of the technicians was constantly appealed to in the course

of wringing confessions out of them. The whole business of industrialization proceeded in the midst of such chaos, and under an authoritarian system of such rigidity, that it was possible to find "sabotage" in any place, at any moment. I could give countless examples. My late brother-in-law, the construction engineer Khayn, educated at Liège, was building a large sovkhoz not far from Leningrad. He said to me, "To be honest, I should not build it. There is a lack of building material, it comes with delays, its quality is lamentable. If I refuse to work under these insane conditions, I will be denounced as a counterrevolutionary traitor and sent to a concentration camp. So I build as well as I can, with what I can get since all the plans are bogus, and I may be accused of sabotage from one day to the next. If I fall behind schedule this would again allow me to be accused of sabotage. When I send detailed memos to my supervisors, they reply that I am trying to build a wall of red tape to protect myself, that we live in a time of unremitting struggle: Our duty is to overcome the obstacles!" A typical example. I may add that in my experience the whole mentality of the technician is quite antagonistic to sabotage, dominated as it is by love of technique and a job well done. Even in these hellish conditions Soviet technical experts were full of enthusiasm for their tasks and, all things considered, worked wonders.

—The "Industrial Party," just like the "Peasant Party" of the leading agronomists, was no more than a police invention sanctioned by the Politburo. All that there was in fact was a fairly widespread "technocratic mentality." I often heard my engineer friends speak about the future with confidence and maintain that in the newly industrialized USSR real power would obviously belong to the technicians, best able to direct and to assure the progress of the new economic system. Technicians saw themselves as indispensable and as distinctly superior to the men in the Government.

—Many of them were punished for having actually foreseen the disastrous consequences of certain Government decisions. The old Socialist Groman was arrested after having had a sharp quarrel at the Planning Commission with Miliutin. Groman, at the end of his tether, shouted that the country was being led to the abyss.

—Although foreign espionage did exist, the technicians' plotting

with the governments of London, Paris, and Warsaw, and with the Socialist International, was ascribable purely and simply to conspiracy psychosis and political deception. In the so-called "Menshevik Center" trial, the accused (who of course confessed) allowed themselves to be caught in a flagrant lie by inventing, all to order, a journey to the Soviet Union by the old Menshevik leader Abramovich. Later, the historian Sukhanov, when incarcerated in the Isolator of Verkhne-Uralsk, had documents passed around among the political prisoners relating how the text of confessions had been laid down for him and his fellow defendants by the GPU instructors, how an appeal to their patriotism had been combined with threats of death, and what kind of pledges their inquisitors had given them. (Sukhanov undertook lengthy hunger strikes to obtain the liberty he had been promised; he disappeared in 1934.) During the "Menshevik Center" trial, I met people every day who were connected with the accused, and I was in a position to trace, line by line, the progression of the lie in their evidence.

—The Politburo knew the truth perfectly well. The trials served one purpose only: to manipulate public opinion at home and abroad. The sentences were prescribed by the Politburo itself. The GPU organized Labor Departments, together with the condemned technicians, which continued working for industrialization. Some of the technicians were promptly rehabilitated. Once I had dinner with an outstanding expert in energetics who, in the space of twenty months, had been condemned to death, pardoned, sent to a concentration camp (a Labor Department), rehabilitated, and decorated. The physicist Lazarev was similarly rehabilitated. The historian and Academician Tarle, the only non-Marxist Soviet historian of repute, spent long months in prison and was deported to Alma-Ata; today (1942) he is the most official of all historians in the Soviet Union. The engineer Ramzin, an accomplice (if it is to be believed) of Poincaré and Winston Churchill in the "preparation of war against the USSR" and condemned to the supreme penalty, was pardoned, continued his scientific work in mild captivity, and was rehabilitated at the beginning of 1936, with his principal codefendants, for distinguished services to industrialization.

On the other hand the old Socialists of the so-called "Menshevik Center" disappeared.

—I lived for years in the shadow of these trials. How many times have I heard friends or loved ones of the accused wondering with astonishment and despair: "But why is he lying like that?" I have heard them discussing details of the indictment that would never stand up to scrutiny. Nobody, at least nobody vaguely in the know, believed in these judicial farces whose purpose was transparent. The number of technicians who refused to confess and just disappeared into prisons without trial was much greater than the compliant ones. The GPU knew how to break the recalcitrant ones. I knew men who had endured "uninterrupted interrogation" of twenty or thirty hours, to the point of complete nervous exhaustion. Others had been interrogated under the threat of immediate execution. I remember some, like the engineer Krenikov, who died "during interrogation." The technocrat Paltchinski, accused of sabotage in the flourishing gold and platinum industries, was apparently shot with a revolver by the examining magistrate because he had slapped him. He was subsequently reported shot by firing squad, together with von Mekk, old administrator of the railways, whose probity had been recognized and release promised by Rykov, President of the Council of Commissars.

I was on very close terms with several of the scientific staff at the Marx-Engels Institute, headed by David Borisovich Riazanov, who had created there a scientific establishment of noteworthy quality. Riazanov, one of the founders of the Russian working-class movement, was, in his sixtieth year, at the peak of a career whose success might appear exceptional in times so cruel. He had devoted a great part of his life to a severely scrupulous inquiry into the biography and works of Marx—and the Revolution heaped honor on him, and in the Party his independence of outlook was respected. Alone, he had never ceased to cry out against the death penalty, even during the Terror, never ceased to demand the strict limitation of the rights of the Cheka and its successor, the GPU. Heretics of all kinds, Menshevik Socialists or Oppositionists of Right or Left, found peace and work in his Institute, provided only that they had a love of knowledge. He was still the man who had told a Conference to its face: "I am not one of those Old Bolsheviks who for twenty years were described by Lenin as old fools..."

I had met him a number of times: stout, strong-featured, beard and mustache thick and white, attentive eyes, Olympian forehead, stormy temperament, ironic utterance... Of course his heretical colleagues were often arrested, and he defended them, with all due discretion. He had access to all quarters and the leaders were a little afraid of his frank way of talking. His reputation had just been officially recognized in a celebration of his sixtieth birthday and his life's work when the arrest of the Menshevik sympathizer Sher, a neurotic intellectual who promptly made all the confessions that anyone pleased to dictate to him, put Riazanov beside himself with rage. Having learnt that a trial of old Socialists was being set in hand, with monstrously ridiculous confessions foisted on them, Riazanov flared up and told member after member of the Politburo that it was a dishonor to the regime, that all this organized frenzy simply did not stand up and that Sher was half-mad anyway.

During the trial of the so-called "Menshevik Center," the defendant Rubin, one of Riazanov's protégés, suddenly brought his name into the case, accusing him of having hidden in the Institute documents of the Socialist International concerned with war against the Soviet Union! Everything that was told to the audience was engineered in advance, so this sensational revelation was inserted to order. Summoned on that very night before the Politburo, Riazanov had a violent exchange with Stalin. "Where are the documents?" shouted the General Secretary. Riazanov replied vehemently, "You won't find them anywhere unless you've put them there yourself!" He was arrested, jailed, and deported to a group of little towns on the Volga, doomed to penury and physical collapse; librarians received the order to purge his writings and his editions of Marx from their stocks. To anybody who knew the policy of the Socialist International and the character of its leaders, Fritz Adler, Vandervelde, Abramovich, Otto Bauer, and Bracke, the fabricated charge was utterly and grotesquely implausible. If it had to be admitted as true, Riazanov deserved to die as a traitor, but they merely exiled him. As I write this book I learn that he died a couple of years ago (in 1940?) alone and captive, nobody knows where.

Was there then no basis of truth at all in the trial of the "Menshe-

vik Center"? Nikolai Nikolayevich Sukhanov (Himmer), a Menshevik won over to the Party, a member of the Petrograd Soviet from its inception in 1917, who had written ten volumes of valuable notes on the beginnings of the Revolution and worked in the Planning Commissions with his fellow defendants Groman, Ginsberg, and Rubin, did have a kind of salon, in which talk between intimates was very free and the situation in the country as of 1930 was judged to be utterly catastrophic, as it undeniably was. In this circle, escape from the crisis was envisaged in terms of a new Soviet Government, combining the best brains of the Party's Right (Rykov, Tomsky, and Bukharin, perhaps), certain veterans of the Russian revolutionary movement, and the legendary army chief Blücher. It must be emphasized that for practically three years between 1930 and 1934, the new totalitarian regime maintained itself by sheer terror, against all rational expectations and with every appearance, all the time, of imminent collapse.

From 1928–29 onwards, the Politburo turned to its own use the great fundamental ideas of the now expelled Opposition (excepting, of course, that of working-class democracy!) and implemented them with ruthless violence. We had proposed a tax on the rich peasants—they were actually liquidated! We had proposed limitations and reforms of NEP—it was actually abolished! We had proposed industrialization—it was done, on a colossal scale that we, "superindustrializers" as we were dubbed, had never dared to dream of, which moreover inflicted immense suffering on the country. At the height of the world economic crisis foodstuffs were exported at the lowest possible price in order to build up gold reserves, and the whole of Russia starved.

Beginning in those years, a good many Oppositionists rallied to the "general line" and renounced their errors since, as they put it, "After all, it is our program that is being applied"; also because the Republic was in danger; and finally because it was better to capitulate and build factories than to defend lofty principles in the enforced indolence of captivity. Piatakov had been a pessimist for years. He kept saying that the European and Russian working class was going through a long period of depression, and that nothing could be expected from it for a long time; more, that he had only engaged in battle for the Opposition from a sense of principle and out of his personal attachment

to Trotsky. He capitulated, to be put in charge of banking and industrialization. Ivan Nikitich Smirnov told one of my friends something like this: "I can't stand inactivity. I want to build! In its own barbaric and sometimes stupid way, the Central Committee is building for the future. Our ideological differences are of small importance before the construction of great new industries." He capitulated. So did Smilga. The movement of surrender to the Central Committee in 1928–29 carried off the greater part of the five thousand Oppositionists under arrest (there had been five to eight thousand arrested).

At the beginning, prison and deportation were essentially fraternal. The local authorities, seeing the arrival of these famous militants—today political prisoners, in power only yesterday—wondered if they might not be back in power tomorrow. Radek threatened the heads of the GPU in Tomsk, "Just you wait till I capitulate and then you'll see what kind of man you're dealing with!" Six months after the expulsion of the Party's left wing—us, that is—the Politburo and the Central Committee was torn by savage quarrels: the right-wing Opposition, Rykov, Tomsky, and Bukharin, ranged itself against Stalin, against his policy of forced collectivization, against the dangers of premature industrialization (with no material basis and at the cost of famine), against totalitarian methods. The head of the GPU, Henry Grigorievich Yagoda, was another sympathizer of the Right. For personal motives whose nature is still obscure Kalinin and Voroshilov, despite their right-wing beliefs, gave a majority to Stalin and Molotov.

The Right Opposition was more of a state of mind than an organization; at certain junctures it included the great majority of officials, and enjoyed the sympathy of the whole nation. However, inspired as it was by men of moderate temperament, who on several occasions were insufficiently decisive, it suffered itself to be constantly outmaneuvered, slandered, and finally annihilated. At the end of 1928, Trotsky wrote to us from his exile at Alma-Ata to the effect that, since the Right represented the danger of a slide towards capitalism, we had to support the "Center"—Stalin—against it. Stalin sounded out the leaders of the Left Opposition even while they were in prison: "Will you support me against them if I have you rehabilitated in the Party?" We discussed the question with some uncertainty. In the Isolator,

that is the prison, at Suzdal, Boris Mikhailovich Eltsin demanded that a conference of expelled Oppositionists be summoned as a precondition, and raised the issue of Trotsky's return. The negotiations got no further than this.

In 1929, the hard core of our Opposition is reduced to the following: Trotsky; Muralov, in exile on the Irtysh, in the Tara forests; Rakovsky, now a petty planning official in Barnaul, Central Siberia; Fedor Dingelstedt in a market town in Central Siberia; Maria Mikhailovna Joffe in Central Asia; a fine team of youngsters in prison, including Eleazar Solntsev, Vassily Pankratov, Grigory Yakovin. In Moscow Andrés Nin is at liberty, in Leningrad Alexandra Bronstein and myself. Leon Sosnovsky is in jail. Inside the prisons a few hundred comrades keep up hunger strikes and struggles that are sometimes bloody; in deportation a few hundred others wait for prison to come their way. Our intellectual activity is prodigious, our political action nil. Altogether there must be fewer than a thousand of us. Between the "capitulators" and us there is no contact, only a sharp and growing hostility.

As for the two irreconcilables, Timofey Vladimirovich Sapronov and Vladimir Mikhailovich Smirnov, the first has been deported to the Crimea, ill as he is, and the second to an Isolator where he is slowly going blind.

We managed to maintain some contact with each other. One evening in Moscow in Panaït Istrati's* hotel room, I met a thin old lady, the famous Romanian militant Arbory-Rallé, with whom I spoke about Trotsky. We were worried about him because he had disappeared following his removal from Alma-Ata. Arbory-Rallé had said that she knew the boundless ambition of this man and that he had probably obtained a passport from the Central Committee to go abroad . . . "How can you go around spreading this tale," I asked without mincing my words, "when you know very well that it is false?" The old woman looked at me malignly and simply said, "You are no longer a Communist!" Once she had left, Panaït Istrati burst out, "My God, I did not think it possible for people to descend to such vileness! Explain to me how this is possible after a revolution?" A new wave of arrests had swept the working-class districts of Moscow and there was

talk of one hundred and fifty "Trotskyists" thrown in prison. Panaït Istrati and I paid a visit to Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, the President of the Central Soviet Executive. We were going to see him about certain criminal measures that were in hand against my relatives. Kalinin worked in a small, brightly lit office, very soberly furnished, in an unpretentious house next to the Kremlin. His skin was weathered, his eyes lively, his goatee lank and groomed—an old slyboots of a peasant intellectual. We talked with a fair amount of freedom. I asked him the reason for these arrests of Oppositionists, which were contrary to the Constitution. He gazed calmly straight into our faces, putting on his most sympathetic air, and said, "That's quite untrue... there are so many tales being put about! We have arrested only those involved in anti-Soviet conspiracy, no more than a few dozen people..." Were we to call the Head of State a liar? But could he have said anything else to us? Outside in the street Panaït remarked, "Pity, because he has a fine face on him, that old slyboots..."

In these days there died in a Moscow jail, after a hunger strike lasting either fifty-four or thirty days according to different reports, Georgi Valentinovich Butov, one of Trotsky's former secretaries; they had tried to extort confessions from him which might be used to implicate the Old Man. Let us pass this by in silence, please! Above all, let us not be embittered by the misfortunes of individuals! Only politics counts. In October and November of 1929, I made some effort to shed light on another tragedy, this time in Leningrad, but with no success. On 21 October Albert Heinrichsohn had been arrested, one of our ordinary working-class comrades from the Red Triangle factory, a militant of 1905 and a Civil War Communist. Ten days later his wife was called to the House of Arrest, where all she found of him was a mutilated corpse, its mouth torn. The superintendent explained to the widow that the prisoner had committed suicide, and handed her a 100-ruble note... The Party committees promised an inquiry, which they hushed up. We made our own inquiry, which took me to a tenement of old St. Petersburg: six floors of overpopulated apartments. The dead man's child told us how he had been taken off there, to rooms which he described in detail, to attend a meeting of "Daddy's friends." These "comrades" had interrogated him at length about

the activities and statements of his father. GPU? Or hysteria? We failed to shed any light.

A few months passed and there was the mysterious case of Blumkin. I had known and loved Yakov Grigorievich Blumkin since 1919. Tall, bony, his powerful face encircled by a thick black beard, his eyes dark and resolute, Blumkin then lived next to Chicherin in a freezing room at the Metropole. Recovering from an illness, he was making ready to conduct certain confidential assignments in the East. In the year before, even while the Foreign Ministry officials were assuring the Germans that he had been shot, the Central Committee was placing him in command of perilous operations in the Ukraine.

On 6 June 1918 Blumkin—then nineteen years old—had, on the orders of the Left Social-Revolutionary Party, killed the German Ambassador in Moscow, Count Mirbach. He and his comrade Andreyev had been sent along by the Cheka to look into the case of a German officer; the Ambassador received them in a small drawing room. "I was talking to him, looking into his eyes, and saying to myself: I must kill this man... My briefcase contained a revolver among all the documents. 'Wait,' I said, 'here are the papers,' and I fired point-blank. Mirbach, wounded, fled across the big drawing room, and his secretary flopped down behind the armchairs. In the drawing room Mirbach fell, and then I threw my grenade hard on the marble floor..."

It was the day of the Left Social-Revolutionary rising against the Bolsheviks and the Brest-Litovsk peace; the insurgents hoped to resume the revolutionary war, fighting side by side with the Allies. They lost. Blumkin also told me, "We knew that Germany, in a state of collapse, was incapable of starting a new war against Russia. We wanted to inflict an insult on her. We were banking on the effect of this action in Germany itself." Again: "We were negotiating with German revolutionaries who asked us to help them organize an attempt on the Kaiser's life. The attempt fell through because we insisted that the principal actor should be a German. They didn't find anyone."

A little later, in the Ukraine, towards the time his comrade Bonskoy would be assassinating Field Marshal Eichhorn, Blumkin rallied to the Bolshevik Party. His former party was now outlawed. His former comrades fired several bullets into him and came to throw a grenade

into the hospital ward where he was; he threw it back out of the window. In 1920–21 he was sent to Persia to start a revolution, together with Kuchik Khan, in Gilan on the Caspian coast. And I met him again in Moscow, in the uniform of the Staff Academy, more poised and virile than ever, his face solid and smooth-shaven, the haughty profile of an Israelite warrior. He declaimed lines from Firdousi and published articles on Foch in *Pravda*. "My 'Persian tale'? There were a few hundred of us ragged Russians down there. One day we had a telegram from the Central Committee: Cut your losses, revolution in Iran now off... But for that we would have got to Teheran." I saw him later on his return from Ulan Bator, where he had just organized the army of the People's Republic of Mongolia. The Red Army's Secret Service entrusted him with missions in India and Egypt. He stayed in a small apartment in the Arbat quarter, bare except for a rug and a splendid saddle, a gift from some Mongol prince, and curved sabers hung over his bottles of excellent wine.

Blumkin belonged to the Opposition, without having any occasion to make his sympathies very public. Trilisser, the head of the GPU's Secret Service abroad, Yagoda, and Menzhinsky were well acquainted with his views. All the same, they sent him to Constantinople to spy on Trotsky—perhaps also to arrange some plot against the Old Man. Did Blumkin accept in order to keep an eye on Trotsky's safety? At all events he met the Old Man in Constantinople and undertook to bring us a message from him, which was actually quite harmless. In Moscow he became suddenly aware of being watched at every turn: this surveillance was so minute that he knew he was lost. There is good ground for supposing that a woman GPU agent called Rosenzweig, who had become a confidante of his, betrayed him. When he was on the point of being arrested, knowing that the code of the Secret Service left him without a chance, he went to see Radek. Radek advised him to go at once to the Chairman of the Central Control Commission, Ordzhonikidze, a harsh but scrupulous character who was now the only man who could save his life. Radek arranged the meeting—too late. Blumkin was arrested in the street. He betrayed nobody. After being condemned to death by the GPU's secret Collegium, I know that he requested and obtained a fortnight's reprieve to write his memoirs;

they made a first-rate book . . . When they came to take him to the execution cellar, he asked if the newspapers would publish the news of his decease; they promised him this—a promise that, of course, was never kept. The news of Blumkin's execution was published only in Germany. Leon Sedov spoke to me later of Blumkin's secretary, an enthusiastic young French Communist of bourgeois origin who was shot at Odessa. Sedov's recollection of this young man was full of warmth but his overburdened memory had let his name slip.

I can see us now, the few survivors that we were, in the gardens of the Marx-Engels Institute, gathered around a charming girl comrade, assembling the different cross-references and scraps we had on the last days and death of Blumkin. Should we now, we asked one another, publish the letters of Zinoviev and Kamenev that told how in 1924 the General Secretary had suggested that they get rid of Trotsky "by a Florentine technique"? Would we not cast discredit on the regime by publishing this abroad? I was of the opinion that, whatever else, the information about "Florentine techniques" should be sent to our comrades in the West. I do not know if this was done.

Duplicity began its rule over the Party: a natural consequence of the stifling of free opinion by tyranny. The "capitulator" comrades kept their ideas, of course, and met together; as they were absolutely forbidden to participate in political life, they amounted to no more than a circle viewed with suspicion by the Politburo. I came across Smilga, who gave me an admirable account of the way these men were thinking. (This was in 1929.) He was sore at the pinpricks that Trotsky had dealt him in *My Life*, and shocked by the apotheosis of Stalin, but he said: "The Opposition is all astray with its sterile bitterness. One's duty is to work with and in the Party. Think of what is at stake in these struggles: the agony of a nation of 160 million souls. See how the Socialist revolution is already advancing over its predecessor, the bourgeois revolution: with Danton, Hébert, Robespierre, and Barras, all discussion ended on the guillotine. I am back from Minussinsk. What do our petty deportations amount to? Oughtn't we all to be walking around by now with our heads tucked underneath our arms?" Again: "If only we can bring off this victory" (collectivization) "over the antiquated peasantry, without exhausting the working class, it will be quite splendid . . ."

He had his doubts about it, to tell the truth. (He disappeared into jail in 1932, where he died, doubtless after torture, in 1937.) The program that we hard-core Oppositionists have drawn up will not change now till 1937: the reform of the Soviet State by a return to working-class democracy. The few of us that there are in the hard core are the only ones to be saved from double-dealing by our intransigence, but we too are just "political corpses."

Within the Party, the Right resists expulsion, and the Zinoviev tendency, reinstated but humbled, keeps its forces intact. One of the last actions of our Moscow "Center" had been the publication, in 1928, of pamphlets that told of the confidential discussions between Bukharin and Kamenev. Bukharin, who was still a member of the Politburo and the Party's official theoretician, said, "What can one do before an adversary of this type: a Genghis Khan, a debased product of the Central Committee? If the country perishes, we all perish [i.e., the Party]. If the country manages to recover, he twists around in time and we still perish." Bukharin also told Kamenev, "Nobody must know of this conversation. Don't phone me, the line is tapped. I'm being shadowed and you are being watched." Our "Center" (B. M. Eltsin) may very well have much to answer for in publishing these documents. From that moment onward, the Right of Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky is de facto ousted from power.

In these critical years plot will succeed plot, in a Party where anyone who allows himself to think in terms of the national interest has to have two faces, one for official use and one for other purposes. I shall merely enumerate. At the end of 1930 the President of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic (RFSSR), Sergei Ivanovich Syrtsov, disappears with a whole group of leaders accused of opposition (and his successor, Danil Yegorovich Sulimov, will later suffer the same fate). Together with Syrtsov go Lominadze, Shatskin, and Yan Sten, alias the "Young Stalinist Left." (Lominadze will kill himself around 1935; Yan Sten, classed as a "terrorist," will be shot around 1937.)

At the end of 1932 the "Riutin group" is imprisoned. Riutin, once the Secretary of the Moscow Committee, who had organized gangs of

thugs against us, is close to several intellectuals of the Bukharin tendency, such as Slepkov, Maretsky, Astrov, and Eichenwald (all "Red professors") and also with the Old Bolshevik worker Kayurov. They have drawn up a program of reform for nation and Party, had it distributed in some Moscow factories, and communicated its contents to Zinoviev, Kamenev, and several of us. It is a merciless indictment of the policies of the General Secretary, and concludes by calling for a fresh departure, with the implication that all expelled members, including Trotsky, should be reinstated. The situation of the regime is painted in such bold terms that the following speculation comes at the end: "One might wonder whether these are not the fruits of an immense and quite conscious provocation..." The General Secretary is compared to the police spy Azev of olden times. Riutin, condemned to death by the secret Collegium, is pardoned for a short while... For having read this document without informing on its authors, Zinoviev, himself betrayed by Yan Sten, is once more expelled from the Party: when Yaroslavsky tells him the verdict, he clutches at his throat, chokes, and whispers, "I'll never live through it!" before falling into a faint.

At the end of 1932 two Old Bolsheviks in the Commissariat of Agriculture, freshly back from the Caucasus, denounce the results of collectivization in a circle of intimates, are arrested, and disappear: this is the case of Eismont and Tolmachev. 1933 sees the beginning of the "nationalist deviation" cases in the federated republics: the imprisonment of Shumsky and Maximov in the Ukraine; the suicide of Skrypnik, who was one of Stalin's most determined partisans; Purges in the governments of Central Asia. An engineer, back from deportation in distant Siberia, tells me, "My prison train had three kinds of carriage: one kind lice-ridden and freezing, out of which corpses were cleared—this was for common criminals and abandoned children (*besprizornyi*); another kind, fairly tolerable, for technicians and "hoarders of currency"—the old Liberal Nikolai Vissarionovich Nekrassov, a former Minister of Kerensky, died in one of them; and a privileged carriage for the People's Commissars of Central Asia..."

Our communications with Trotsky were almost completely cut off. Communication among ourselves was so difficult that for months

we thought Rakovsky was dead; he was in fact only sick. I had managed, in 1929 I think, to send Trotsky a voluminous correspondence passed out from the Verkhne-Uralsk prison, written in microscopic characters on thin strips of paper; it was the last he ever received from his persecuted comrades. The *Bulletin of the Opposition* that Trotsky published reached us only occasionally and in fragments, and ceased to reach us altogether at around this time. I was astonished at the thoroughness with which it was possible, in a country so large, to seal off hermetically the frontiers of the intellect, at all events insofar as these could be subject to police control. We knew of the line of Trotsky's thought only through officials imprisoned after returning from abroad, who discussed it all in the prison yards, now the last resorts of free Socialist inquiry in the USSR. We were upset at the discovery that on several serious issues Trotsky, under the unfortunate influence of his Party patriotism, was grossly mistaken. At the time of Blumkin's execution, a normal GPU crime, he still defended this Inquisition on principle. Later, he accepted as true the tales of sabotage and "conspiracy" by technicians and Mensheviks, being unable to imagine the state of inhumanity, cynicism, and mania that our police apparatus had sunk to. We had no means of informing him, though the views expressed on these monstrous impostures by the Socialist press of the period were very shrewd.

Together with Trotsky, we were against reckless industrialization, against forcible collectivization, against the inflated Plans, against the sacrifices and the infinitely dangerous strain inflicted on the country by bureaucratic totalitarianism. At the same time we recognized, through all the disasters, the successes achieved by this same industrialization. This we ascribed to the enormous moral capital of the Socialist revolution. The storehouse of intelligent, resolute popular energy that it had built up was now revealed as inexhaustible. The superiority of planning, clumsy and tyrannical as it was, in comparison with its absence, was also visibly manifest to us. But we could not, like so many foreign tourists and bourgeois journalists with a naïve propensity to the worship of force, fail to note that the cost of industrialization was a hundred times multiplied by tyranny. We remained convinced that the achievements of a system of Socialist democracy

would have been better, infinitely better and greater, with less cost, no famine, no terror, and no suppression of thought.

A few days after my release from prison in 1928, I was laid out by an unendurable abdominal pain; for twenty-four hours I was face-to-face with death. I was saved by chance, in the shape of a doctor friend who came in at once, and another friend, a Menshevik, who would not leave my side in the Mariinsky Hospital till I was out of danger. It was an intestinal occlusion. I can still see the dim night illumination of that hospital ward in which quite suddenly, seized by a great fit of shivers, I emerged from semi-delirium to recover a rich and tranquil inner lucidity.

Serge, with prison beard, and Vlady, the day after his father's release

"I think that I am going to die," I told the nurse, "fetch the house doctor." And I reflected that I had labored, striven, and schooled myself titanically, without producing anything valuable or lasting. I told myself, "If I chance to survive, I must be quick and finish the books I have begun: I must write, write..." I thought of what I would write, and mentally sketched the plan of a series of documentary novels about these unforgettable times. A Russian nurse's pretty, broad-cheeked face was leaning over me, a doctor was giving me an injection; I felt utterly detached from myself, and it occurred to me that my son was, at eight years, already old enough not to forget me. Then I saw the doctor making weird passes with his hand above my face. I managed to sit up, and saw that he was flicking away some great, bloated lice. "Do you think that I shall live?" I asked him. "I think so," he replied seriously. "Thank you for that." On the following morning he told me that I was safe. I had taken my decision: that is how I became a writer.

I had renounced writing when I joined the Russian Revolution. Literature seemed quite a secondary matter—so far as I personally was concerned—in an age like this. My duty was dictated by history itself. Besides, whenever I did any writing, there was such a striking discrepancy between my sensibility and my opinions that I could actually write nothing of any value. Now that nearly ten years had rolled by, I felt sufficiently in tune with myself to write. I reflected that our

own reactionary phase might be lengthy; the West, too, might be stabilized for years to come; and since I was refused the right to join the work of industrialization, except at the price of my freedom of opinion, I could (while remaining uncompromising as an Oppositionist forced into inactivity) provide a serviceable testimony on these times. Because of my love of history I had accumulated a pile of notes and documents about the Revolution. I set myself to writing *Year One of the Russian Revolution* and to gathering material for *Year Two*. I finished *Men in Prison*.

Historical work did not satisfy me entirely. Apart from the fact that it demands both resources and undisturbed leisure of an order that I shall probably never enjoy, it does not allow enough scope for showing men as they really live, dismantling their inner workings and penetrating deep into their souls. A certain degree of light can only be cast on history, I am convinced, by literary creation that is free and disinterested, which is to say devoid of any market preoccupations. I had, and still have, an immense respect for literary activity—and an equally great contempt for "Literature." Many authors write for pleasure (especially the rich ones) and may do it well; many others practice a conscious profession for the sake of earning a living and winning a name. Those who have a message within them express it in the process, and their contribution has human value. The others are simply suppliers to the book trade. My conception of writing was and still is that it needs a mightier justification: as a means of expressing to men what most of them live inwardly without being able to express, as a means of communion, a testimony to the vast flow of life through us, whose essential aspects we must try to fix for the benefit of those who will come after us. In this respect, I belonged to the tradition of Russian writing.

I knew that I would never have time to polish my works properly. They would be worthwhile without that. Others, less engaged in combat, would perfect a style, but what I had to tell, they could not tell. To each his own task. I had to struggle bitterly for my family's daily bread, in a society where all doors were closed to me, and where people were often afraid to shake my hand in the street. I asked myself every day, without any special emotion, but engrossed by the problem of

rent, my wife's health, my son's education, whether I would not be arrested in the night. For my books I adopted an appropriate form: I had to construct them in detached fragments which could each be separately completed and sent abroad posthaste; which could, if absolutely necessary, be published as they were, incomplete; and it would have been difficult for me to compose any other way.

Individual existences were of no interest to me—particularly my own—except by virtue of the great ensemble of life whose particles, more or less endowed with consciousness, are all that we ever are. And so the form of the classical novel seemed to me impoverished and outmoded, centering as it does upon a few beings artificially detached from the world. The usual French novel, with its drama of love and self-interest focused, at best, upon a single family, was an example I was determined to avoid at all costs. My first novel had no central character; its subject was not myself, nor this or that person, but simply men and prison. I next wrote *Birth of Our Power*, sketching the surge of revolutionary idealism across the devastated Europe of 1917–18. After that *Conquered City*, a stern documentary on Petrograd in 1919. If anyone influenced me it was John Dos Passos, though I was not attracted by his literary impressionism. I had the strong conviction of charting a new road for the novel. Among Russian writers Boris Pilnyak was venturing on a similar path.

Between 1928 and 1933 I thus completed one historical book and three novels, which were published in France and Spain. From Paris I received encouragement from Jacques Mesnil, Magdeleine Paz, the brilliant poet Marcel Martinet,* Georges Duhamel,* Léon Werth,* and the review *Europe*. I needed it to some small degree, since I was working almost entirely alone, persecuted, and "more than half-beaten," as I wrote to my distant friends. In Paris itself, my books met hostility from two quarters. Bourgeois critics viewed them as revolutionary works which were best passed over in silence (besides, the author was the devil of a long way off, wasn't he?); left-wing critics, dominated, influenced, or paid by the Soviet Union, boycotted me even more thoroughly. Despite it all, my books lived out their lives tenaciously, but they earned me very little.

In Russia my situation was critical. My old friend Ilya Ionov, the

head of the literary publishing house of the State Press, a former convict and once a Zinovievite Oppositionist, stopped the printing of my first novel when it was already translated, proofread, and paginated. I went to see him. "Is it true what they tell me?" "It's true. You can produce a masterpiece every year, but so long as you are not back in the line of the Party, not a line of yours will see the light of day!"

I turned my back on him and walked out.

At the time when my second novel was published in Paris, I raised the issue with Comrade Leopold Averbach, the General Secretary of the Association of Proletarian Authors. Our acquaintance was of long standing. He was a young Soviet careerist possessed of an extraordinary talent for the bureaucratic callings. Less than thirty, he had the hairless head of the young senior official, the verbal fluency of a Congress demagogue, and the dominating, falsely sincere eyes of the manipulator of meetings.

"I will see to it, Victor Lvovich! I know about your attitude, but as for boycotting you! Come now! We've not got as bad as that!" While this was going on, the Leningrad Writers' Publishing Cooperative, which was about to sign a contract with me, ran afoul of the categorical veto of the Regional Party Committee's Cultural Section. The hazards of politics did, it is true, give me my revenge on Averbach and his uniformed literati. I published in Paris a small book entitled *Literature and Revolution*, which inveighed against the conformism of so-called "proletarian literature."

Scarcely had this volume left the press when Leopold Averbach learnt from the Soviet newspapers that the Association of Proletarian Authors had been dissolved by the Central Committee and that he was no longer the General Secretary of anything at all! He was still the nephew of Yagoda, the head of Security, and a good bureaucrat to boot. He delivered a number of speeches condemning his own "cultural politics" of yesterday. People asked each other, smiling, "Have you read Averbach's diatribe against Averbach?" And the Central Committee gave him the task of managing a Communist organization in Magnitogorsk. There Leopold Averbach initiated a sabotage trial, acted himself as prosecutor against the technicians concerned, had them condemned to death according to the ritual—and disap-

peared from my view. (He was, in 1937, after the fall of Yagoda, denounced in the Soviet press for a traitor, saboteur, terrorist, and Trotskyist, and thence shot.) Although my little book on *Literature and Revolution* had anticipated the Central Committee's decision, it was banned in the USSR.

At this point I should have dealt at length with the Soviet writers whose life I shared; with their resistance, timid and stubborn at once, to the smothering of their creative freedom; with their humiliations and their suicides. I should have outlined portraits of remarkable men. I have no space to do so, and of these men, some are still alive. In speaking of them I might put them in danger. What I must tell here briefly is the tragedy of a literature of mighty spiritual sources, strangled by the totalitarian system—and also the diverse reactions evoked by this tragedy in men supremely gifted for creative work, whether poets or novelists.

Poets and novelists are not political beings because they are not essentially rational. Political intelligence, based though it is in the revolutionary's case upon a deep idealism, demands a scientific and pragmatic armor, and subordinates itself to the pursuit of strictly defined social ends. The artist, on the contrary, is always delving for his raw material in the subconscious, in the preconscious, in intuition, in a lyrical inner life that is rather hard to define; he does not know with any certainty either where he is going or what he is creating. If the novelist's characters are truly alive, they function by themselves, to a point at which they eventually take their author by surprise, and sometimes he is quite perplexed if he is called upon to classify them in terms of morality or social utility. Dostoevsky, Gorky, and Balzac brought to life, all lovingly, criminals whom the Political Man would shoot most unlovingly. That the writer should involve himself in social struggles, have enriching convictions, that his potency will increase to the extent that he identifies himself with the rising classes, thus communicating with masses of individuals who carry within them a precious potential—all this does not significantly alter the simple psychological truths that I set out above. Is it possible for one man to be both a great politician and a great novelist at the same time, uniting in one personality Thiers and Victor Hugo, Lenin, and Gorky? I doubt it, given that the two

temperaments are profoundly incompatible, and anyway, history has not yet achieved such a success. Under all regimes writers have adapted to the spiritual needs of the dominant classes and depending on the historical circumstances, this raised them to greatness or maintained them in mediocrity. Their adaptation, in great periods of interior and spontaneous culture, was full of contradictions and fertile torments. The new totalitarian states, imposing on their writers narrow ideological directives and absolute conformism, succeed only in killing the creative faculty within them. Between 1921 and 1928 Soviet literature had its glorious season of full flower. From 1928 onwards it declines and dies out. Doubtless they go on printing—but what gets printed?

Max Eastman found the right expression for it: "Writers in uniform." The conscription and uniforming of Russia's writers took several years to complete; creative freedom disappeared side by side with freedom of opinion, with which it is inseparably bound. In 1928 or 1929 the Leningrad writers were on the point of protesting openly against the censorship, the press campaigns of slander and threats, and the administrative pressure. I was consulted and thought we should. Gorky, when asked, "Do you think, Alexei Maximovich, that the time has come to get ourselves deported?" replied, "Yes, it's time." I also heard him make the following joke: "In the old days, Russian writers only had the policeman and the archbishop to fear; today's Communist official is both at once. He is always wanting to lay his filthy paws on your soul." Nothing was done, apart from interviews with high officials (who offered reassurances) and routine acts of petty cowardice. When the press denounced Zamyatin and Pilnyak as public enemies, the first for a biting satire on totalitarianism, the other for a fine realist short novel, full of suffering (*Mahogany*), my writer friends voted whatever was required against their two comrades, only to go and ask their pardon, in private. When, at the time of the technicians' trial, the Party organized demonstrations in favor of the execution of the culprits and unanimous votes for the death penalty, the writers voted and demonstrated like everybody else—this although they numbered men who knew what was going on and were troubled by it, such as Konstantin Fedin, Boris Pilnyak, Alexei Tolstoy, Vsevolod Ivanov, and Boris Pasternak.*

During the Ramzin trial the Leningrad Writers' Union summoned me to an important meeting. Knowing that it was to concern itself with demanding executions, I did not go. A member of the Bureau came to see me.

"Doubtless you were ill, Victor Lvovich?"

"Not at all. I am on principle opposed to the death penalty in our country at this present time. I think that the revolver has been abused in such excess that the only way of restoring any value to human life in the USSR would be to proclaim the abolition of the death penalty in accordance with the 1917 Program. I request you to take note of this statement."

"Certainly, certainly. In that case, will you kindly take note of our resolution, unanimously carried, on the trial of the Industrial Party, and give us your approval with your reservation about the death penalty?"

"No. I think that trials are the affair of the courts, not of the unions."

And yet... nothing happened to me. Two schoolmistresses who adopted the same attitude (I did not know them) were forthwith expelled from their union, hounded from their jobs, arrested as counter-revolutionaries, and deported. The worst of it all was that after having gone to so much trouble to obtain an outcry for bloodshed, the Central Committee reprieved the condemned men.

Every time this sort of voting took place, the writers felt a little more domesticated. Our social tea-gatherings were divided into two parts. From eight to ten at night conversation was conventional and directly inspired by the newspaper editorials: official admiration, official enthusiasm, etc. Between ten and midnight, after a few glasses of vodka had been drunk, a kind of hysteria surfaced, and conversations —now diametrically at odds—were sometimes punctuated by fits of anger or weeping. Face-to-face, no more official-speak, but instead an alert critical intelligence, a tragic sorrow, a Soviet patriotism coming from souls being flayed alive.

Andrei Sobol, an outstanding novelist and a good revolutionary (ex-convict), had killed himself at the same time as Sergei Yesenin, in 1926. There were several suicides of young folk; I remember that of Victor Dmitriev and his wife. On 14 April 1930, Vladimir Mayakovsky fired

a bullet into his heart. I wrote of this (in Paris, anonymously): "This death comes after eighteen leaden months of stagnation in literature: not one work in this period—not a single one!—but plenty of frenzied campaigns against one writer or other, lots of major and minor excommunications and recantations of heresies in abundance. We were unable to hold on to this artist, that much is clear. Enormous publicity, official recognition, financial rewards were not enough for him precisely because of the portion of lies and the great emptiness they concealed. He was a wonderful 'fellow traveler'; he wasted his best talents in a weary quest for God knows what ideological line, demanded of him by petty pedants who made a living out of it. Having become the most-requested rhymester of hack journalism, he suffered at sacrificing his personality to this daily drudgery. He felt that he was going to the dogs. He never stopped justifying himself and pleading that it was a surrender to superior force . . ." Mayakovsky had just joined Leopold Averbach's Association of Proletarian Authors. In his last poem, "At the Top of My Voice!" he wrote of "*the petrified crap of the present . . .*"

I know that he had spent the previous evening drinking, bitterly justifying himself before his friends who kept telling him harshly, "You're finished; all you ever do is piss out copy for the hacks." I had only held one conversation of any significance with him. He was annoyed at a long article I had devoted to him in *Clarté* at a time when he was unknown in the West. "Why do you say that my Futurism is no more than Past-ism?"

"Because your hyperboles and shouts, and even your boldest images, are all saturated with the past in its most wearisome aspects. And you write:

"In men's souls
Vapor and electricity . . .

"Do you really think that's good enough? Surely this is materialism of a peculiarly antiquated variety?"

He knew how to declaim before crowds, but not how to argue. "Yes, I'm a materialist! Futurism is materialist!" We parted cordially,

but he became so official that I never met him again and most of the friends of his youth dropped him.

I no longer saw anything of Gorky, who had come back to the USSR terribly changed. My near relatives, who had known him since he was a youth, had stopped seeing him since the day he refused to intervene on behalf of the five condemned to death in the Shakhty trial. He wrote vile articles, merciless and full of sophistry, justifying the worst trials on grounds of Soviet humanism! What was going on inside him? We knew that he still grumbled, that he was uneasy, that his harshness had an obverse of protest and grief. We told each other: "One of these days he'll explode!" And indeed he did, a short while before his death, finally breaking with Stalin. But all his collaborators on the *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life) of 1917 were disappearing into jail and he said nothing. Literature was dying and he said nothing.

I happened to catch a glimpse of him in the street. Leaning back alone, in the rear seat of a big Lincoln car, he seemed remote from the street, remote from the life of Moscow, reduced to an algebraic cipher of himself. He had not aged, but rather thinned and dried out, his head bony and cropped inside a Turkish skullcap, his nose and cheekbones jutting, his eye sockets hollow like a skeleton's. Here was an ascetic, emaciated figure, with nothing alive in it except the will to exist and think. Could it, I wondered, be some kind of inner drying, stiffening, and shrinking peculiar to old age, which had begun in him at the age of sixty? I was so struck with this idea that, years later in Paris, at the very time when Romain Rolland, then sixty-five, was following exactly the same spiritual path as old Gorky, I was inexpressibly reassured by the humanity and clear-sightedness of André Gide, and I thought gratefully of John Dewey's honest perspicacity.

After this encounter I tried to see Alexei Maximovich but was barred at the door by his secretary (GPU), a robust character with pince-nez, generally despised and singularly well-named since he was called Kriuchkov—i.e., Hook.

Boris Andreyevich Pilnyak was writing *The Volga Falls to the Caspian Sea*. On his worktable I saw manuscripts under revision. It had been suggested to him that, to avoid banishment from Soviet literature,

he should remodel *Mahogany*, that "counterrevolutionary" tale of his, into a novel agreeable to the Central Committee. This body's Cultural Section had assigned him a co-author who, page by page, would ask him to suppress this and add that. The helpmate's name was Yezhov, and a high career awaited him, followed by a violent death: this was the successor to Yagoda as head of the GPU, shot like Yagoda in 1938 or 1939.

Pilnyak would twist his great mouth: "He has given me a list of fifty passages to change outright!" "Ah!" he would exclaim, "if only I could write freely! What would I not do!" At other times I found him in the throes of depression. "They'll end up by throwing me in jail... Don't you think so?" I gave him new heart by explaining that his fame in Europe and America safeguarded him; I was right, for a while. "There isn't a single thinking adult in this country," he said, "who has not thought that he might be shot..." And he related to me details of killings that he had picked up while drinking with tipsy executioners. He wrote a wretched article for *Pravda* on some technicians' trial, received a passport for travel abroad on Stalin's personal recommendation, visited Paris, New York, and Tokyo, and came back to us dressed in English tweed, with a little car of his own, dazzled by America. "You people are finished!" he told me. "Revolutionary romanticism is out! We are entering an era of Soviet Americanism: technique and practical soundness!" He was childishly pleased with his fame and material comforts... Thirty-five years of age, books like *The Naked Year*, *Ivan and Maria*, and *Machines and Wolves* behind him, a love for and familiarity with the lands of Russia, goodwill towards the powerful... He was tall, an oval head, strong features, a Germanic type, very egotistical and very human. He was criticized for not being a Marxist, for being a "typical intellectual," for having a national and peasant vision of the revolution, for emphasizing instinct above reason...

Shortly before my arrest we took a long car trip together to enjoy vistas of sunshine and unsullied snow. Suddenly he slowed down and turned to face me, his eyes saddened: "I do believe, Victor Lvovich, that one day I too will put a bullet into my head. Perhaps it's what I ought to do. I cannot emigrate like Zamyatin: I could not live apart

from Russia. And I have the feeling that as I come and go there is a gun in my back, held by a pack of blackguards . . ."

When I was arrested he had the courage to go and protest to the GPU. (He disappeared without trial in 1937, quite mysteriously: one of the two or three real creators of Soviet literature, a great writer translated into ten languages, disappeared without anyone in the Old World or the New—except myself, and my voice was stifled—inquiring after his fate or his end!) One critic has said that the works he had written with Yezhov "shout the lie and whisper the truth."

The star of Count Alexei Nikolayevich Tolstoy was climbing gently to its zenith. I had met him in Berlin in 1922, an authentic counter-revolutionary émigré, negotiating his return to Russia and his future royalties. Highly esteemed by the educated classes under Tsarism, a discreet liberal and honest patriot, he had fled with the White forces from the Revolution. He was a decent stylist and now and then a good psychologist, skillful enough to adapt to the public taste, to turn out a successful play or a novel of contemporary interest. In character, manner, and morals he was really a high Russian lord of olden days, loving beautiful things, good living, polite literature, cautiously liberal opinions, the odor of power, and, what is more, the Russian people: "our eternal little muzhik."

He invited me out to his villa at Dietskoe Selo, where his furniture came from the Imperial palaces, to hear the first chapter of his *Peter the Great*. At this time he was not particularly well-regarded, and was deeply distressed by the sight of the devastated countryside; he conceived of his great historical novel as a defense of the peasant folk against tyranny as well as an explanation of the present tyranny in terms of one of the past. A little later, the analogy he drew between *Peter the Great* and the General Secretary turned out to be strangely satisfying to the latter. Alexei Tolstoy, too, now began to protest aloud, when he was in his cups, that it was almost impossible to write in such an oppressive atmosphere. He told the General Secretary himself as much, in the course of a writers' reception, and the General Secretary drove him home in his car, reassured him, lavished him with pledges of friendship . . . On the following day, the press stopped attacking the novelist: Alexei Tolstoy was revising his manuscripts.

Today he is the official "great writer" of Soviet Russia. But has he ever inquired after the fate of Boris Pilnyak or so many others who were his friends? The quality of his writings has sunk quite incredibly, and falsifications of history can be found in them on a scale that is simply monstrous. (I am thinking of a novel of his about the Civil War.)

Three men far removed from this rising official celebrity used to meet in an old cottage in Dietskoe, and through them I made contact with a different set of values. These were representatives of the Russian intelligentsia of the great period from 1905 to 1917. The ancient, shabby interior of the place seemed pervaded through and through with silence. Andrei Bely and Feodor Sologub would be playing chess. Sologub, the author of the novel *The Petty Demon*, was in his last (the sixty-fourth) year of his life: a small man of an astounding pallor, his oval face well-proportioned, his forehead high, bright-eyed, timid, and introverted. Since the death of his wife he had been delving into mathematics for some proof of an abstract form of immortality. His work had been concentrated variously on the mystical world, the sensual world, and the Revolution. His utterances displayed a childish ingenuity, and it was said of him that all he lived on now was "his big secret." In the visionary eyes and passionate voice of Andrei Bely an inextinguishable flame still burned. He was fighting for his imprisoned wife and writing his autobiography, *At the Frontier of Two Epochs*; he lived even now in a state of intellectual fever. Ivanov-Razumnik, now failing, his face cadaverous and his suit threadbare, would from time to time emit some mordant observation; he was allowed to deal only with subjects of literary scholarship, writing his study of Shchedrin—until he disappeared.

Censorship, in many forms, mutilated or murdered books. Before sending a manuscript to the publisher, an author would assemble his friends, read his work to them, and discuss together whether such-and-such pages would "pass." The head of the publishing enterprise would then consult the Glavlit, or Literature Office, which censored manuscripts and proofs. Once the book was published, official critics would issue their opinion, on which depended the sales of the book to libraries, whether it would be tolerated, or whether it would be withdrawn from circulation. I saw the entire edition of the first volume of

an *Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, which had cost the intellectuals of Leningrad years of toil, sent to be pulped. Success was manufactured wholly by the Party offices. The chosen book, recommended to all the libraries in the land, was printed in tens of thousands of copies; the Foreign Languages Publishing House translated it into several languages; and the author, loaded with money and praise, became a "great writer" in the space of a season, which of course deceived nobody. Such was the case with Maria Shaginyan and her novel *Hydrocentral*. In the same period, censorship and "criticism" achieved the silencing of a masterly Communist writer who had risen from the people, Artem Vesioly. But then—the title he had given his outstanding novel was *Russia Washed in Blood*!

The Cultural Section of the Central Committee decided upon a subject for the theater for the season. The ideology was also given along with this theme, whether it be the harvest or the reform of counterrevolutionaries through work in concentration camps. Thus I watched a performance of the celebrated play *The Aristocrats* by Afinogenov, at the end of which we saw priests, saboteur technicians, bandits, pickpockets, and prostitutes, restored by forced labor in the forests of the north, strolling joyfully, all spruced up, in an idyllic camp. The author whose play was most in tune with the propaganda became famous and rich, performed in all the theaters of Soviet Eurasia, translated by *International Literature*, commented on abroad... Meanwhile, young poets, as prodigiously gifted as a Pavel Vassilev, would go to prison as soon as people started to declaim their verses in their homes...

What I cannot reproduce is the atmosphere of overpowering, sickening absurdity that surrounded some of the meetings of writers who were compelled to fanatical obedience. One day in a small, dark meeting room in Herzen House, we heard a report from Averbach on the spirit of the proletariat, the collective farm, and Bolshevism in literature. Lunacharsky, frozen in a stance of weary boredom, kept passing me ironical little notes—but he spoke nothing but a few quasi-official remarks, in terms more intelligent than the official speaker had used. Ernst Toller, lately released from a Bavarian prison, was seated between the two of us. Bit by bit the whole deadening speech was translated for him, and in his great dark eyes, in his face of strength and

gentleness, a kind of confusion could be seen. Surely in his years of imprisonment as an insurgent poet, he had pictured the literature of the Soviets as altogether different from this. I remember a meeting of our Leningrad writers' union in which some young men of letters, who were nonetheless practically unlettered, suggested the formation of "mopping-up" squads, to go to the secondhand bookshops and remove from them historical works which the Leader had just attacked. An uneasy silence fell across the room.

There would certainly be no place for me in this fawning literature, and even my relationships with its writers were not at all easy. My nonconformist attitude was a reproach to them, and my presence compromised them. The friendships I had left were brave ones; I have no right to speak of them here. How and on what could I live? For some time after my expulsion from the Party I was allowed to carry on with my translations of Lenin for the Lenin Institute, though my name was kept out of the published volumes and I was checked, line by line, by experts charged with the task of uncovering possible sabotage in the disposition of semicolons. I knew that Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya was working in similar conditions on her memoirs of Lenin; a committee was reviewing her every line. Gorky was altering his own memoirs at the demand of the Central Committee. Kreps, the head of International Social Publishing, a little red-eyed Tatar, greeted me, rubbing his hands: "I've just started up a bookshop in the Philippines!" He put on a friendly voice to let me know that, because of my correspondence abroad, I was in grave danger of being indicted for treason (a capital charge). This said, he invited me to reflect, hinting at a glorious future for me if I returned to the Party: "One day you will run the Lenin Institute of Paris!" (Poor Kreps disappeared himself in 1937.)

Then came the years of rationing, famine, and black-marketeering. Authors with the right ideas received fantastic secret rations from the GPU cooperatives, including even butter, cheese, and chocolate! "Do have a little taste," a friend asked me, "of this highly confidential Gruyère..." Dubious writers, that is, any who were lyrical, mystical, or apolitical, got mediocre official rations. I got nothing except for an occasional bit of fish, and some of the comrades came to tell me that

they had had to battle hard in committee to stop my name from being deleted from the list.

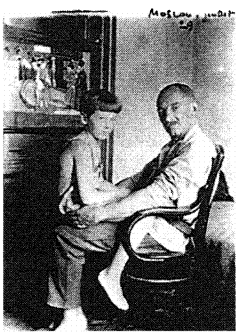
I lived with my wife and son in a small apartment in the center of Leningrad, 19 Zhelyabova Street, in a "communal flat" of a dozen rooms, occupied by, on average, a good thirty people. In several cases a whole family lived in one room. A young GPU officer, plus his wife, child, and grandmother, lived in a small room overlooking the courtyard; I knew that he had been put there, in the room vacated by a jailed technician, so as to have "someone" near me. In addition, a Bessarabian student was spying on me, watching my comings and goings and listening to my conversations on the telephone (which was situated in the corridor). A little GPU secret agent lived in a hidey-hole next to the bathroom; he assured me of his friendship, without concealing the fact that he was always being interrogated about me; he was the amiable type of informer. Thus, even at home, I was under constant watch from three agents. A fake Oppositionist, who was visibly annoyed at the role he had to assume, visited me once or twice a week for confidential political discussions—and I knew that our conversation was filed away verbatim the next day in my dossier. A young relative on my wife's side came one night to knock on my door. He was a delicate youth, recently married, who lived poorly: "Listen, I've just come from the GPU. They want me to make detailed reports on the people who visit you—I'll lose my job if I refuse. What can I do, God, what can I do?"

19 Zhelyabova Street

"Don't fret," I replied. "We'll draw up your reports together..." Another time, also at night, an oldish intellectual, bespectacled, asthmatic, and terrified by his own audacity, came in and sat for a long time recovering his breath in an armchair. Then, gathering all his courage together: "Victor Lvovich, you do not know me, but I know you, and have a high opinion of you... I am a censor in the Secret Service. Be discreet, discreet: they're always paying attention to you."

"I have nothing to hide. I think what I think. I am what I am." He repeated, "I know, I know, but it's very dangerous..."

During my frequent sojourns in Moscow, I felt more and more that I was a hunted man. Stay at a hotel? Impossible, the hotels were reserved for officials. My relatives, who usually put me up, found my visits too compromising and begged me to go elsewhere. Most often I spent the night in houses that had just been emptied out by the GPU; there, people had no fear of compromising themselves any further by being my hosts. Acquaintances avoided me in the street. Bukharin, whom I ran into just outside the Lux Hotel, slipped by with a furtive "How's things?"—eyes right, eyes left, then off sharp. Pierre Pascal's small room, in a converted hotel on Leontievsky Street, was another spot that was devilishly spied on, but one breathed a free air there. The Italian Rossi (Angelo Tasca), who was still on the Comintern Executive, came there to stretch out on the couch. He had the broad, lumpy brow of a dreamer—and he still hoped to bring the International back to health! He was planning to join with Ercoli (Togliatti), in winning over a majority of the Central Committee of the Italian Party, and then offer support to Bukharin. (Ercoli betrayed him and Rossi was expelled.) He told me, "I can assure you, Serge, that every time there are three of you together, one of you is an agent provocateur." "There are only two of us," I answered, alluding to Andrés Nin, always in a good mood, his long hair tossing in the wind, with whom I used to stroll through Moscow, shadowed at each step.



Pierre Pascal with nephew Vlady, Moscow 1929

Luck was on my side. One night I was going back through twenty degrees of frost to the house of some comrades to sleep in the bed of a friend who had been arrested. A frightened little girl half-opened the door to me: "Get away quickly. They are turning the flat inside out . . ." I did not know where to go, but I went. Another time I was asked to a private party, but missed the telephone call inviting me; that evening all the guests were arrested. Perhaps my presence there had been anticipated? Still another time, I escaped from Maria Mikhailovna Joffe's house while the police were surrounding it. One of them, naturally,

clung to my heels; without turning around I hurriedly skirted the white façade of the Comintern building, turned the corner, and made an acrobatic leap to grab a tram going along at full speed... This will last as long as it lasts... (The young widow of our great comrade Joffe disappeared forever, deported to Central Asia with her son—who died there—and then imprisoned several times. Her life ended in captivity in 1936, no one knows exactly where or how. I had known her as a fair-haired young girl, proud and coquettish; when I met her again she was a woman, charming in the way of Russian peasant women, earnest and yet playful. Her moral stamina formed a salutary influence in the Oppositionist deportee colonies of Turkestan. She struggled for eight years without weakening.)

Later on, they uncovered a whole series of conspiracies. How could anyone conspire in these conditions—when it was scarcely possible to breathe, when we lived in houses of glass, our least gestures and remarks spied upon?

Our crime as Oppositionists lay simply in existing, in not disowning ourselves, in keeping our friendships and talking freely in one another's company. In the two capitals, the total extent of those relationships of mine that were based on free thinking was no more than twenty individuals, all differing in their ideas and characters. Spare, tough, dressed as the true proletarian that he in fact was, the Italian syndicalist Francesco Ghezzi, of the Unione Sindicale, emerged from imprisonment at Suzdal to tell us ardently of the victories of industrialization. His hollow face was lit up by his feverish eyes. And he would come back from the factory with a troubled brow. "I have seen workers falling asleep under their machines. Do you know that real wages have sunk to one-twentieth during my two years in the Isolator?" (Ghezzi disappeared in 1937.)

Gaston Bouley, as full of whimsy as a seasoned Paris street urchin, now working in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, was making plans to return to France, but did not dare ask for a passport: "They'd lock me up straightaway!" (He was deported to Kamchatka in 1937.) That much-mellowed anarchist Herman Sandomirsky, also on the staff of the Foreign Affairs Commissariat, was publishing his powerful studies of Italian Fascism, and acting as our middleman with the

GPU; he was putting up a quiet fight for the Kropotkin Museum. (He disappeared in 1937, deported to Yenisseisk and probably shot.) Zinaida Lvovna Bronstein, Trotsky's youngest daughter, was ill: she managed to go abroad, where she too soon committed suicide. Her character was, point for point, like that of her father, with a lively intelligence and a fine spiritual toughness. Her husband, Volkov, was in prison, never to be released. Andrés Nin sent parcels to the victimized comrades, gathered material on Marx, and translated Pilnyak into Catalan. In order to get permission to leave for Spain, then in the midst of revolution, he sent the Central Committee a positive ultimatum, framed in dauntless language. He was allowed to leave—and I shall speak later of his dreadful end. Occasionally we would indulge in a few fantasies. I remember saying: "If a madman were to shoot some satrap or other, there is a grave risk that we would all be shot before the week was out." I did not know how truly I spoke.

The persecution went on for years, inescapable, tormenting and driving people crazy. Every few months the system devoured a new class of victim. Once they ran out of Trotskyists, they turned on the kulaks; then it was the technicians; then the former bourgeois, merchants and officers deprived of the useless right to vote; then it was the priests and the believers; then the Right Opposition . . . The GPU next proceeded to extort gold and jewels, not balking at the use of torture. I saw it. These political and psychological diversions were necessary because of the terrible poverty. Destitution was the driving force. I am convinced that the brutal anti-religion campaigns had their origins in the banning of the Christian festivals, because it was the custom to eat well on these holy days and the authorities were able to supply neither white flour nor butter or sugar. Dechristianization led to the mass destruction of churches and of historical monuments, some as remarkable as the Sukhareva tower, in the center of Moscow; they needed construction materials (and they were losing their heads).

In this atmosphere my wife lost her reason. I found her one evening lying in bed with a medical dictionary in her hand, calm but ravaged. "I have just read the article on madness. I know that I am going mad. Wouldn't I be better off dead?" Her first crisis had come during a visit to Boris Pilnyak's; they were discussing the technicians'

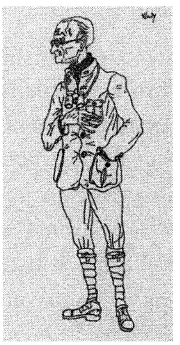
trial, and she pushed back the cup of tea offered her, with revulsion—"It's poison, don't drink it!" I took her to psychiatrists, who were generally excellent men, and she settled down in the clinics. However, the clinics were full of GPU people curing their nervous difficulties by exchanging secrets. She would come home again a little better for a while, and then the old story began again: ration cards refused, denunciations, arrests, death sentences demanded over all the loudspeakers placed at the street corners...

She had suffered much from the disgusting persecution which was visited upon my in-laws—simply because they were my in-laws, and libertarians to boot. And always, at the root of it, was the "struggle for life" in destitution. My father-in-law, Russakov, had fought in the 1905 revolution at Rostov, acted as Secretary to the Russian Seamen's Union in Marseilles, and was expelled from France in 1918 for organizing a strike on ships loaded with munitions for the Whites. Now he was a cloth-capped worker, living with his family in a princely couple of rooms in the same communal apartment as ourselves; from the moment that he became defenseless there were plans afoot to take them off him. People from the Party and the GPU came to insult him in his own home and hit my wife in the face; they denounced him as a counterrevolutionary, ex-capitalist, anti-Semite, and terrorist! On the same day, he was hounded from his job and his union, and indicted, and whole factories, at the request of agitators, demanded the passing of the death penalty upon him—and they were on the way to obtaining it. This took place at a time when I was in Moscow, and the informers who kept watch on me at home thought I was under arrest, since they had lost sight of me. Actually I was staying with Panaït Istrati in a little villa lost in the depths of the Bykovo woods. Having learnt the news from the papers, Istrati, Dr. N——, and I took the train and, once in Leningrad, ran to the editorial office of the local *Pravda*. "What is this senseless crime you are committing?" we asked angrily of the editor, Rafail, a hardened, spiritless official with a shaven head. "We can prove a hundred times over that all this stuff is lies and that at the most there has been a halfhearted scuffle in a corridor, in which a young woman has been attacked and an old worker insulted!"

"I personally respect working-class democracy," replied this perfect

functionary, "and I have here ten resolutions from factories demanding the death penalty! However, out of consideration for you, I will suspend this campaign pending the investigation!"

The Party leaders, by contrast, proved to be understanding and moderate. Naturally the inquiry fizzled out. A public trial ended in the acquittal of my wife and her parents, to applause from the spectators. On the same day, the Communist cells ran meetings to demand the quashing of "this scandalous judgment" and the District Attorney, yielding, as he told me, to "the voice of the masses," obliged. A second trial took place, before a suitable magistrate. When Russakov was relating his life history, complete with documentation, and was telling of his trips to New York (twenty years ago, as a dishwasher) and Buenos Aires (in the hold with the other emigrants), this magistrate replied sarcastically, "You pretend to be a proletarian, but I see you have made trips abroad!"



Panaït Istrati by Vlady, 1927

However, since all that was behind the case was a provocation on the part of a female GPU informer, the second trial resulted only in a verdict of censure, passed, it is true, upon the victims of the crime. This sordid affair lasted a whole year, during every month of which the Russakovs were refused ration cards, on the grounds that they were "ex-capitalists"; Russakov himself could find no work. The Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate held its own trial and had him reinstated in the union, without managing to find him a job... The investigator for the Inspectorate was a tall, thin young man with untidy hair and gray eyes, who displayed a singular honesty. His name was Nikolayev—and subsequently I wondered if this was the same Nikolayev, a former GPU and Inspectorate officer, who shot Kirov in 1934.

Istrati went back to France, heartbroken by these experiences. It is with deep emotion that I recall his memory. He was still young, with the leanness of the Balkan highlander, rather ugly with his large, salient nose, but so alive despite his tuberculosis, so enthusiastic for living! Whether as a sponge fisherman, a sailor, a smuggler, a tramp, or a

bricklayer's mate, he had passed through every port on the Mediterranean. Then he began to write, and cut his throat to end it all. Romain Rolland rescued him; literary fame and the sweet money of royalties came to him out of the blue, with the publication of his Haiduk tales. He wrote without any idea of grammar or style, as a born poet madly in love with simple things like adventure, friendship, rebellion, flesh and blood. He was incapable of theoretical reasoning, and so could not fall into the trap of convenient sophistry. People told him, in my hearing: "Panaït, one can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. Our revolution . . ." etc. He exclaimed, "All right, I can see the broken eggs. Where's this omelette of yours?"

We came out of the model penal colony of Bolshevo, where hardened criminals worked in freedom under their own supervision. Istrati's only comment was, "A pity that you can't have all this comfort and such a wonderful system of work unless you've murdered at least three people!" Of the editors of reviews who paid him 100 rubles per article he would ask sharply, "Is it true that a postman here earns fifty rubles a month?" At every turn he would burst into fits of violent indignation. It took Istrati's inborn mulishness to enable him to resist the corrupt approaches that were made to him, and leave the Soviet Union saying, "I shall write a book, full of enthusiasm and pain, in which I shall tell the whole truth." The Communist press immediately accused him of being an agent of the Romanian Siguranta . . . He died, poor, forsaken, and utterly confused, in Romania. It is partly owing to him that I am still alive.

Shortly afterwards I found great consolation in doing a little work alongside another great, indeed exemplary character: Vera Nikolayevna Figner. I was translating her memoirs and she overwhelmed me in her inflexible tone with corrections. She was, at seventy-seven years of age, a tiny old woman, wrapped in a shawl against the cold, her features still regular and preserving the impression of a classical beauty, a perfect intellectual clarity, and a flawless nobility of soul. Doubtless she looked upon herself proudly as the living symbol of the revolutionary generations of the past, generations of purity and sacrifice. As a member of the Central Committee of the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will Party) from 1879 to 1883, Vera Figner was responsible, together

with her comrades, for the decision to take to terrorism as a last resort; she took part in organizing ten or so attempts against Tsar Alexander II, planned the last and successful attack of 1 March 1881, and kept the Party's activity going for nearly two years after the arrest and hanging of the other leaders. After this she spent twenty years in the prison fortress of Schlüsselburg, and six years in Siberia. From all these struggles she emerged frail, hard, and upright, as exacting towards herself as she was to others. In 1931, her great age and quite exceptional moral standing saved her from imprisonment, although she did not conceal her outbursts of rebellion. She died at liberty, though under surveillance, not long ago (1942).

From week to week from 1928 onwards, the ring closes in relentlessly. The value of human life continuously declines, the lie in the heart of all social relationships becomes ever fouler, and oppression ever heavier; this will last up to the economic relaxation of 1935 and the subsequent explosions of terror. I asked for a passport for abroad, and wrote the General Secretary a resolute and forthright letter to this effect. I know that it reached him, but I never had a reply. All I got out of it was military demotion, though on friendly terms. I was the Deputy Commander of the Front Intelligence Service, corresponding to a rank of colonel or general. I expressed my astonishment at keeping this post at a time when the whole Opposition was being imprisoned, and the Commandant of Staff Selection told me with a smile, "We know perfectly well that in the event of war the Opposition will do its duty. Here we are practical men first and foremost." I was amazed by this display of sense. So that I might be free to obtain a passport the military authorities reduced me to the ranks and discharged me, on the grounds that I had passed the age limit for military service.

At the end of 1932, the economic and political situation suddenly grew even worse. An actual famine was raging through three-quarters of the countryside; news was whispered of an epidemic of plague in the Stavropol region in the northern Caucasus. On 8 November Stalin's young wife, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, committed suicide in the Kremlin, with a revolver shot in the breast. A student, she had seen the portraits of her husband in the streets, covering whole buildings;

she had lived not only at the summit of power, surrounded by the official lie and the tragedies of conscience, but also in the simple reality of Moscow. Kamenev's daughter-in-law, a young woman doctor who had given first aid to Alliluyeva, was held in custody for some days, and a legend ascribing the death to appendicitis was spread abroad.

Mysterious arrests began among the former Oppositionists who had rallied around the "general line." At long intervals, and with meticulous precautions, I would go and visit Alexandra Bronstein in Leningrad, on the other side of the Neva, in the great, red-brick workers' city of the Vyborg district. Her face calm beneath her white hair, she gave me firsthand news of the Old Man, then in exile at Prinkipo, on the Golden Horn. She corresponded with him openly, and was to pay for this bravery with her life (disappearing in 1936). She told me of the suicide of Zinaida Lvovna Bronstein in Berlin, and showed me a letter from Trotsky, which said that he was surrounded by so many dangers that he never went out, and took the fresh air only very discreetly in his garden. A few days later, the villa he occupied caught fire, perhaps by accident...

I learnt of the arrests of Smilga, Ter-Vaganian, Ivan Smirnov, and Mrachkovsky. Mrachkovsky, an unrepentant Oppositionist who had submitted to the Central Committee, was building a strategic railway line to the north of Lake Baikal, and Stalin had a short while ago received him in a friendly fashion. The leader had complained of having only idiots around him: "A pyramid of idiots! We need men like you..." I saw Evgeni Alexeyevich Preobrazhensky, and we opened our hearts for a moment in a dark little yard beneath leafless trees. "I do not know where we are going," he said. "They are stopping me from breathing, I expect anything to happen..." Symptoms of moral treason were being uncovered in his economic works on the world crisis. Hands in his pockets, melancholy and hunched against the cold night air, he was, as I inexplicably sensed, a doomed man.

My own surveillance had grown so close that arrest was perceptibly in the offing. It seemed to me that, in my communal apartment, the old mother and the wife of the GPU officer and even this young officer himself, so punctilious and pleasant, were looking at me in a peculiar way. The old lady sought me out timidly and said, "How terrible his

job is! Every time my son goes out at night, I pray for him . . ." She gave me a meaningful look and added: "And I also pray for *the others* . . ."

I judged that I had a seventy percent probability of disappearing in the very near future. As a unique opportunity came my way to get a message to some friends in Paris, I drew up a letter, or testament, addressed to Magdeleine and Maurice Paz, Jacques Mesnil, and Marcel Martinet, asking them to publish the essentials of it if I disappeared. In this way the last years I had spent in resistance would not have been completely wasted.

I believe that I was the first, in this document, to define the Soviet State as a totalitarian state:

> For many, many years, the Revolution has been in a phase of reaction . . . We must not conceal from ourselves the fact that Socialism carries within itself seeds of reaction. These seeds have flourished mightily on the soil of Russia. At the present moment, we are more and more confronted by an absolute, castocratic totalitarian State, drunk with its own power, for which man does not count. This formidable machine rests on two supports: and all-powerful State Security, which has revived the traditions of the late eighteenth-century secret chancelleries (Anna Iohannovna), and a bureaucratic "order," in the clerical sense of the word, of privileged executives. The concentration of economic and political powers—by which the individual is held by bread, clothing, work, and placed totally at the disposition of the machine—allows it to neglect the individual and to concern itself only with big numbers and the long term. This regime is in contradiction with everything that was stated, proclaimed, intended, and thought during the Revolution itself.

I wrote:

> On three essential points, superior to all tactical considerations, I remain and shall remain, whatever it may cost me, an avowed and unequivocal dissident, whom only force can silence:

1. *Defense of man.* Respect for man. Man must be given his rights, his security, his value. Without these, there is no Socialism. Without these, all is false, bankrupt, and spoiled. I mean: man whoever he is, be he the meanest of men—"class-enemy," son or grandson of a bourgeois, I do not care. It must never be forgotten that a human being is a human being. Every day, everywhere, before my very eyes this is being forgotten, and it is the most revolting and anti-Socialist thing that could happen.

And on this point, without wishing to erase a single line of what I have written on the necessity of terror in revolutions threatened by death, I must state that I hold as an abomination unspeakable, reactionary, sickening, and corrupting, the continued use of the death penalty as a secret and administrative measure (in time of peace! in a State more powerful than any other!).

My viewpoint is that of Dzerzhinsky at the beginning of 1920 when, as the end of the Civil War appeared, he moved—and Lenin willingly ratified—the abolition of capital punishment for political offenses. It is also that of those Communists who for several years have advocated a reduction in the inquisitorial powers of the Extraordinary Commissions (Cheka and GPU). So low has the value of human life fallen, and so tragic is the result, that all capital punishment in the present regime must be condemned.

Equally abominable, and unjustifiable, is the suppression, by exile, deportation, and imprisonment more or less for life, of all dissent in the working-class movement.

2. *Defense of the truth.* Man and the masses have a right to the truth. I will not consent either to the systematic falsification of history or to the suppression of all serious news from the press (which is confined to a purely agitational role). I hold truth to be a precondition of intellectual and moral health. To speak of truth is to speak of honesty. Both are the right of men.

3. *Defense of thought.* No real intellectual inquiry is permitted in any sphere. Everything is reduced to a casuistry nourished on quotations... Fear of heresy, based on self-interest, leads to

dogmatism and bigotry of a peculiarly paralyzing kind. I hold that Socialism cannot develop in the intellectual sense except by the rivalry, scrutiny, and struggle of ideas; that we should fear not error, which is mended in time by life itself, but rather stagnation and reaction; that respect for man implies his right to know everything and his freedom to think. It is not against freedom of thought and against man that Socialism can triumph, but on the contrary, through freedom of thought, and by improving the condition of man.

Dated: Moscow, February 1st, 1933.

I had no time to read it over. The friends who could see this message to its destination were leaving—and they expected to be arrested at the last minute...

On the day that this letter reached Paris my forebodings were proved true. Nobody knew what had become of me, and I myself did not know what would become of me.

8.
THE YEARS OF CAPTIVITY
1933–1936

MY POOR invalid has that look of absolute agony in her face... I go out in the cold morning to find her some sedatives and telephone the psychiatric clinic. I also want to see the newspapers posted up by the Kazan Cathedral, because somebody has just told me that Thaelmann has been arrested in Berlin. I am aware of being followed, which is quite natural. Except that this time, "they" are trailing so close behind me that I begin to be worried. As I come out of the chemist's they stop me. This on the pavement of October 25th Prospect, with everybody bustling past all around me.

"Criminal Investigation. Kindly follow us, citizen, for purposes of identification." Speaking low, they take out their red cards and station themselves on either side of me. I shrug my shoulders.

"I have quite certainly nothing to do with criminal investigations. Here is my card from the Soviet Writers' Union. Here are some drugs for a sick woman who cannot wait. Here is the house where I live; let us go and see the caretaker; he will make my identity clear to you."

No, it is absolutely necessary for me to come with them for ten minutes, the misunderstanding will obviously be cleared up immediately... All right. They have a consultation: which car? They look carefully at the cars parked nearby, pick the most comfortable one, and open its door for me. "Kindly take a seat, citizen." They have a curt exchange with the dumbfounded driver.

"To the GPU, fast, come on!"

"But I can't! The Director of the Trust will be coming out, I have to..." "No discussions. You'll be given a chit. Move off!" And off we moved, straight to the new GPU building, the handsomest in the new Soviet Leningrad, fifteen stories high with façades of clean granite, at

the angle made by the Neva and the former Liteynaya Prospect. A side door, a spyhole. "Here's the criminal." (The criminal is myself.) "Kindly enter, citizen." Hardy have I entered the huge waiting room when a friendly young soldier comes up to me and shakes my hand: "Good day, Victor Lvovich! Did everything go off properly?"

Yes, more or less...

"So," said I, "there is no doubt of my identity?" He gave a knowing smile.

The building is spacious, stern, and magnificent. A bronze Lenin welcomes me as it does everybody else. Five minutes later I am in the vast office of the investigating magistrate responsible for Party cases, Karpovich. He is a large, ginger-haired man, coldly cordial, sly, and guarded.

"We are going to have some long talks together, Victor Lvovich..."

"I have no doubt of that. But we shall have none at all unless first you grant some requests I have. I must ask you to arrange to have my wife transferred, no later than today, to the Red Army's psychiatric clinic; after that I want to talk over the telephone to my son—he is twelve years old—as soon as he comes home from school."

"Certainly." Before my eyes Comrade Karpovich telephones the instructions to the clinic. He takes kindness so far as to offer to telephone my home while my sick wife is being collected. Then: "Victor Lvovich, what is your opinion on the general line of the Party?"

"What? You don't know? Is it just to ask me this that you have caused all this trouble?" Karpovich answers: "Must I remind you that we two here are Party comrades?"

"In that case let me ask you the first questions. Is it true that Thaelmann has been arrested in Berlin?" Karpovich thinks that the report must be treated with caution but that in Berlin "things are going badly." My second question bothers him: "Has Christian Rakovsky died in deportation?" The ginger-haired figure hesitates, looks into my eyes, saying, "I can't tell you anything," and indicates *No* by a motion of his head.

The interview which we are beginning is to last from midday to past midnight, interrupted by the meal I am given and by rests during which, when I feel the need to relax, I go for a walk along the big cor-

ridor outside. We are on the fourth or fifth floor, and through the huge windowpanes I stare at the bustle of the town, I see twilight and then night falling over the teeming view, and I wonder when I shall again see this city that I love above all—if indeed I ever see it again? We talk of everything, point by point: agrarian question, industrialization, Comintern, inner-Party regime, etc. I have objections to the general line on all points; they are Marxist objections. I see them bring in all the papers that have been seized at my home, several trunkfuls. We shall not be short of subject matter for theoretical discussion! We have tea. Midnight. "Victor Lvovich, it is with great regret that I must have you transferred to the House of Arrest; however, I am giving orders that you are to be well-treated there."

"Thank you." It is quite nearby. A young plainclothes policeman, clean-shaven and open-faced, goes with me and, since I ask it, we lean for a while on the embankment overlooking the dark waters of the Neva. The air from the open sea is bracing. I always find this river so charged with turbulent power that I am stirred by it as though by some Russian song.

The old House of Arrest has not changed since 1928—nor, doubtless, over the last fifty years. Are prisons then so durable as to prevail over revolutions and the fall of empires? Formalities of entry, a registration office, and a series of partitions through which a man passes like a grain on its way into some intricate milling mechanism. In passing I meet a tall, elegant old man with a noble head of white hair; he tells me that he is from the Academy of Sciences, and that they have just taken away his spectacles, which is the worst nuisance of all... Iron staircases, ascended in dusk, then a door opens for me in the thick stonework, opens and then shuts. A poky cell, lit feebly by one pitiful bulb, just like an underground passage. Somebody rises from one of the two bunks, hails me, and then introduces himself. He is a sorry kind of figure and I find it hard at first to follow him.

"Petrovsky, Writers' Union, Poets' Section..."

"I'm a prose writer myself," I say.

I am shivering with nervous exhaustion under my heavy leather coat. The poet is shivering too beneath his old sheepskin-lined cloak, from cold and weakness. He is young, thin and wan, with a sparse,

discolored beard. We strike up an acquaintance. He talks and talks, and I sense that my presence is an event for him, which is true enough: he has been living alone for months in this subterranean solitude, wondering if he was going to be shot. A kindred restlessness keeps us awake for a long time, and brings us close together, strangely moved, each checking the same outflow of feeling, not knowing what to do for each other. I can do only one thing for him: listen to him and reassure him. I prove to him that they cannot shoot him, that the examining magistrate who threatens him is a ruffian using a professional stratagem; arrests are submitted to the secret Collegium that, however slightly, still does ponder possible repercussions. I am calm and reasonable, and I think I see the poet straighten a little, his confidence restored.

He is a child of highways and famine. Self-trained, he became a schoolteacher, and began to write simple poems—which I found full of charm—because he loves to gaze on the rustle of cornfields, the clouds racing above the country scenes, the brushwood and the roads shining by moonlight. "A peasant poet, do you follow?" Along with two or three friends, he published a handwritten journal at Dietskoe Selo; a subversive tendency was unearthed in it. Why, they asked him, is there not a single reference to collectivization in your poems? Because you are hostile to collectivization? The worst of it was that he belonged to a literary circle—in no way clandestine—run by the philosopher Ivanov-Razumnik, a former Left Social-Revolutionary. Thus I learn that my friend Ivanov-Razumnik, that great, idea-hungry idealist, is also in jail. "Say some of your poems to me again, comrade poet, I find them very beautiful..." He recites them in an undertone, eyes ablaze, shoulders huddled for warmth under his fur, neck emaciated. We go to bed at dawn, never to forget this past night.

On the following day I was transferred to Moscow, discreetly, in a passenger compartment, accompanied by two GPU men, one in plain clothes and the other in inconspicuous uniform, both of them comradely and polite. The transfer proved that the case was serious. But what case? There was not and could not be anything against my name except the crime of my opinions, which had been common knowledge

for years and could easily have been dealt with on the spot. It is true of course that, where facts are absent, there is a free hand for fiction. An agent provocateur's visit came back to my memory. I reflected too that my message to my friends in Paris could have been intercepted. That would be very serious, but on what passage in it could they lean to justify a heavy charge? Persons corresponding abroad were often charged with espionage (a capital offense). I had written: "I sometimes begin to wonder whether we are not bound to be murdered one way or another in the end, for there are plenty of ways of going about the job . . ."

Was not that discrediting the regime in a most criminal manner? But then, the letter was only to be published if I disappeared. I thought I had hit on it: I had also written, "And the lies that one breathes in like the air! The whole press was proclaiming a few days ago that the fulfillment of the Five-Year Plan was resulting in a sixty-eight percent increase in wages . . . However, the value of the ruble has sunk to about a thirtieth while this increase in nominal wages was being achieved . . ." In the eyes of the secret Collegium, that could justify a charge of "economic espionage." In short, I reached Moscow pretty disturbed, but quite determined to resist unyieldingly.

I was at once driven to the Lubianka, that big building in Dzerzhinsky Square built in the commercial style of the last century. Within the hour I found myself in a minute cell, perhaps in the cellars, windowless but powerfully lit, in the company of a stout-bodied worker with a forceful chin who told me that he had been a GPU car driver, now arrested for having heard a counterrevolutionary leaflet read out among some friends without denouncing everybody immediately. This suffocating box where we were, two yards long by two across, was driving him to distraction. He finally told me that it was here that prisoners condemned to death waited before being taken off for execution . . . By about three in the morning there were ten or so of us in this cell, now stuffy and over-hot with our breath. Some of us were on the two iron bedsteads, others were standing on the chilly tiling, others again tucked themselves into the door recess. I had a headache and my heart was paining me. We all behaved very deferentially towards each other, with the affability of undertaker's men. I

remember how much we were cheered by an old Jew who recalled having been arrested a year ago to the very day. Now, at last, he was being charged with having allegedly deducted a commission on the sale of a typewriter by one office to another. "There is no evidence," he said naïvely, "and besides it is not true, but there is a difference between the two sets of accounts. How do you think I can explain that away?" Our little corner of Hell shook with good-natured laughter.

The last to arrive was the most likable; he was an intellectual from Siberia, about sixty, vigorous, tense, cheerful. We started to talk and when he found out I was an Oppositionist he chuckled as he told me about the case that had brought him to Moscow from Irkutsk, and which filled him with optimism. In the wake of famine and foot-and-mouth disease in his far-flung region, criminal charges had been drummed up against agronomists, veterinarians, and engineers, for counterrevolutionary sabotage. They had been ordered to make confessions that were contrary to common sense. He had resisted for months, suffering hunger, cold, and solitary confinement. Finally, he had yielded after a promise of improved conditions and confessed all that they wanted. After this, he had been put in a heated cell, allowed to receive food and see his wife, and promised leniency from the secret Tribunal because of his contrition. "But here's the catch! We had confessed to so many crazy things that Moscow did not believe it. Moscow asked for the file and because it was so outrageous we were ordered to come—the two main defendants and the examining magistrate—so that the case could be studied here! We traveled for one month with the judge who felt at our mercy, was afraid of us, and never ceased to overwhelm us with kindnesses . . ."

A few hours later, when it was morning, I was taken into a spacious ground-floor barrack room that looked like a camp of shipwrecked mariners. About fifteen men had been living more or less at home there for weeks or maybe months, waiting for goodness knows what. Several of them had mattresses, the others made their beds on the cement floor. The atmosphere was heavy with anxiety, and breathed a forced good humor. A young soldier standing near the window talked aloud to himself incessantly; one sentence that he kept obstinately repeating could be heard quite clearly: "Ah well! Let them shoot me!" followed

by a crude oath. I found myself a place and asked: "Citizens, can any of you lend me a haversack or suitcase, anything for me to rest my head on?" A big fellow in Siberian costume, his face flecked with the traces of smallpox, offered me a briefcase wrapped in a towel and as he lay down next to me introduced himself: "N——, lecturer in agronomy at Irkutsk..." Another agronomist, this one from Moscow, dressed very smartly and with an expression of extreme distress on his face, joined us as we were talking together. He had been arrested the night before and could not get over the shock; all the leading figures in the People's Commissariat for Agriculture had just been whisked off by the GPU, and, a fact that most deeply affected this "non-Party technician," his Communist superiors were now somewhere in this selfsame prison, yes, even Deputy People's Commissar Wolfe, and Konar and Kovarsky! He felt as though he was in the middle of an earthquake.

That day, I was taken up by lift to the floors that constituted the inner prison. A short medical inspection, then my fifth search: absolutely nothing was left on me of those trivial objects that people tend to carry about with them, but this final search was so careful that it disclosed the pencil hoarded away in the lining of my jacket, and the half razor blade that I had taken the precaution to conceal in my lapel. And so at last I entered the prison of prisons, which was obviously reserved for prominent persons and those charged with the gravest offenses. It was a prison of noiseless, cell-divided secrecy, constructed inside a block that had once been occupied by an insurance company. Each floor formed a prison on its own, sealed off from the others, with its individual entrance and reception kiosk; colored electric light signals operated on all landings and corridors to mark the various comings and goings, so that prisoners could never meet one another. A mysterious hotel corridor, whose red carpet silenced the slight sound of footsteps, and then a cell, bare, with an inlaid floor, a passable bed, a table and a chair, all spick and span. A big, barred window with a screen masking it from the outside. On the freshly painted walls, not a single scribble or scratch. Here I was in the void, enveloped in a quite astonishing silence. Except that, far away, with a jangle of bells and ironmongery, the trams were passing by in Miasnitskaya Street, which at all hours of the day was full of people... Soldiers of the Special

Corps, with the smart style and polish of purely mechanical functioning, shut the door gently behind me. I asked their NCO for books and paper. "You will present that request to the Examining Magistrate, citizen."

Here, in absolute secrecy, with no communication with any person whatsoever, with no reading matter whatsoever, with no paper, not even one sheet, with no occupation of any kind, with no open-air exercise in the yard, I spent about eighty days. It was a severe test for the nerves, in which I acquitted myself pretty well. I was weary with my years of nervous tension, and felt an immense physical need for rest. I slept as much as I could, at least twelve hours a day. The rest of the time, I set myself to work assiduously. I gave myself courses in history, political economy—and even in natural science! I mentally wrote a play, short stories, poems. I made a great effort not to go over my "case" except in a purely utilitarian manner and for a limited time—as a precaution against becoming obsessed with it. My inner life was most intense and rich, in fact not too bothersome at all. In addition, I did a little gymnastics several times a day, and this did me a great deal of good. My diet—black bread, wheaten or millet pasta, fish soup—was tolerable but inadequate, and I had hunger pains every evening. On 1 May (festival of the world's workers!) I was given an extraordinary meal: mincemeat cutlets, potatoes, and stewed fruit! I got thirteen cigarettes and thirteen matches a day. Out of bread crumbs I made myself a set of dice and a kind of calendar.

The monotony of this existence was broken up by the investigation. I had half a dozen interrogations, spaced out at intervals. Magistrate Bogin (sharp features, spectacles, uniform) opened the series. Probably an alumnus of the GPU training school (advanced course, naturally), he had a ready flow of talk, doubtless to try out his little psychological tricks, and I let him go on, being well aware that in a situation like this it is best to speak as little as possible yourself and listen carefully to everything you are told. I was awoken around midnight—"Investigation, citizen!"—and taken via lifts, cellars, and corridors to a floor lined with offices that, I discovered, was just next door to my cell section. All the rooms along these endless corridors were set aside for the use of inquisitors. The one to which I was taken was

numbered 380 or 390. I only met one person on the way: a sort of bishop, most imposing, came out of one of the offices, leaning on a cane. I said to him aloud, just for the pleasure of dismaying our warders, "Take care of yourself, *batiushka* (Father)!" And he answered me gravely with a motion of his hand. That must have started some pretty reports for them to study.

I went into my first examining session in an aggressive mood. "So! You are resuming the tradition of interrogations at night! Just as in the worst days of Tsarism. Congratulations!" Bogin was not put out: "Ah! how bitterly you speak! If I call you in at night, it is because we work day and night, we do! We have no private life, us!"

We were smiling now, in excellent humor. Bogin stated that he knew all. "All. Your comrades are so demoralized—I have their depositions here. You wouldn't believe your eyes. We should like to know whether you are an enemy or, despite your disagreements, a real Communist. You can refuse to answer my questions, just as you please: the investigation will be closed this very day and we shall view you with the esteem befitting an open political adversary." A trap! You'd like me to make your job easy by giving you carte blanche to go and cook up all kinds of findings against me with your secret reports—findings that would earn me years in the Isolator at the very least. "No. I am anxious to reply to the examination. Carry on with it."

"Well then, let us talk together like the Communists we both are. I am at the post that has been assigned me by the Party. You wish to serve the Party, yes, I quite understand you. Do you admit the authority of the Central Committee?"

A trap! If I admit the Central Committee's authority, I have joined in the game, they can make me say what they like in the name of devotion to the Party. "Excuse me. I have been expelled. I have not asked to be readmitted. I am not bound by Party discipline any longer . . ."

Bogin: "You are deplorably formalistic!"

Myself: "I demand to know what I am accused of, so that I can refute the charges. I am sure that no blame in Soviet law can be attached to me."

Bogin: "Formalism! So you'd like me to lay my cards out on the table?"

Myself: "Are we in a card-playing mood?"

Eventually he told me that documents from Trotsky had been found at my home. "That is not true," I said. And that I often went to see Alexandra Bronstein; we discussed the number of visits I had paid her.

"You talked Opposition matters with her, admit it!"

"No. We talked about our state of health and about literature!"

"You have been in touch with Andrés Nin, who is a counterrevolutionary, haven't you?"

"Yes, by post, on postcards. Nin is a model revolutionary and you do know that he is in jail at Algeciras?"

Bogin offered me cigarettes, and explained that my outlook was visibly that of a hardened counterrevolutionary, which was extremely dangerous for me. I interrupted him: "Must I conclude that I am being threatened with the death penalty?" He protested, "Not at all! But, all the same, you are well on the way to destroying yourself. Your only hope for safety lies in a change of attitude and a complete confession. Think it over." I was returned to my cell at about 4:00 a.m.

After a number of night interviews of this kind, neither of us had got anywhere. All I learnt was that they were trying to link me with some person called Solovian, who was quite unknown to me. This information both puzzled and worried me: it was a door opening onto some conspiracy or other.

Every time I went to an examining session, the electric signals operated all along my route, so efficiently that I did not even see any warder other than my own. One night I noticed that several of the warders were gazing at me in a peculiarly attentive way as I went out. When I returned, at dawn, I found them crowded around the reception office; they seemed to be looking rather benevolently upon me, and the one who searched me was so friendly as to venture a little joke. I discovered later that on that very night the thirty-five agricultural experts had been executed, along with Konar, Wolfe, and Kovarsky, all of them prominent officials, and including several influential Communists. They had gone off just as I had, down these very corridors, summoned just as I had been "for the examining session," and the warders knew no more than that they had been shot somewhere

down there in the cellars. Doubtless they assumed that I was earmarked for the same end—and so looked upon me with the humane attentiveness that I had noticed. When I came back, the warders were both surprised and pleased to see somebody return from that last "examining session." As I went to and from interrogations, I happened to pass in front of the gaping mouth of a cement-lined corridor on the ground floor, which was lit with brutal brilliance. Was that the door to the final descent?

Abruptly, the investigation was cut short. I had a strong sense of danger. I was summoned in the middle of the day and received by some high-ranking person, gaunt, gray, and wrinkled, with a cold little face perched on a birdlike neck, and thin, straight lips. I recognized the examining magistrate for serious Oppositional cases, Rutkovsky, the personal aide to the Head of the Department, Molchanov, and a member of the secret Collegium. (Molchanov was shot in the period of the Yagoda trial.) Rutkovsky was crisp and vicious.

"I can see that you are an unwavering enemy. You are bent on destroying yourself. Years of jail are in store for you. You are the ringleader of the Trotskyite conspiracy. We know everything. I want to try and save you in spite of yourself. This is the last time that we try."

I was chilled to the bone. I felt I had to gain a few moments and interrupted him. "I'm very thirsty. Could you get me a glass of water?" There was none there; Rutkovsky had to stand up and call someone. I had time to think, and his effect was ruined. He resumed.

"So I'm making one last attempt to save you. I don't expect very much from you—I know you too well. I am going to acquaint you with the complete confessions that have been made by your sister-in-law and secretary, Anita Russakova.* All you have to do is say, 'I admit that it is true,' and sign it. I won't ask you any more questions, the investigation will be closed, your whole position will be improved, and I shall make every effort to get the Collegium to be lenient to you." So Anita Russakova had been arrested! She used to take down quite insignificant translations at my dictation. She was an apolitical girl whose only interest was in music, innocent in all things as a newborn baby.

"I'm listening," I said.

Rutkovsky began to read, and I was terrified. It was sheer raving. Anita related that I had made her send messages and take parcels to addresses which were completely strange to me, to people I did not know at all, notably to a certain Solovian who lived in a "Red Army settlement." This heap of falsehood, coupled with the address of a "military settlement," came as an immediate revelation to me. Therefore, they intended to shoot me. Therefore, Anita had been tortured into lying like this. Therefore, she was doomed just as I was.

I burst out: "Stop! Not one more line. You are reading a detestable falsehood, every line is false. What have you done to this child to make her lie like this?" I was in a rage and I felt that I had to be, that I no longer had anything to gain by discretion. I might as well get myself shot and have done with it.

My inquisitor pretended to be angry, or else really was: "Do you know that you are insulting me? And that that is another serious offense?"

"Let me calm down and I will answer you more soberly. Out of respect for myself, out of respect for you and for the rank that you hold, I refuse to hear another line of this deposition, which is a pack of lies; I demand to be confronted with Anita Russakova."

"You're destroying yourself."

As a matter of fact, I was demolishing the whole case, thereby saving myself and Anita as well. One moment of cowardice meant the triumph of falsehood, and then they could shoot us. I knew that the GPU inquisitors worked under the scrutiny of different committees, especially the Central Committee's Control Commission, and that, before they could bring about the verdicts they wanted, they had to prepare their briefs according to the rules.

Every day I wrote to Rutkovsky demanding a confrontation with Anita so that I might unmask what I called her "lies." "Let her describe the places where she pretends to have gone!" I was aware of being in a dilemma. Clearly, I had caught my inquisitors in a flagrant fabrication. I was putting the GPU on trial. After that, could I be allowed to live, whether released or sent to an Isolator where I would meet other comrades and tell them about it, from which I could write to the Government authorities? Rutkovsky stood to lose at the very

least his career if he failed to break me (I am convinced that he perished with his superiors Molchanov and Yagoda in 1938). I decided to prepare myself for the worst. At best, I thought, I will be sent to the secret Isolator of Yaroslav for years, where the prisoners are kept in solitary confinement. At worst, I'll be shot. The only argument against was that they would have to give some sort of explanation abroad, since I was known in France as a writer and militant. They would invent something false and that would be the end of it! I spent days and nights thinking that I would be summoned for "interrogation" and taken down the starkly lighted, cement-walled, ground-floor corridor toward the execution cellar. I examined the problem of life and death. I considered the mystery of the individual's life which emerges out of the great collective life and seems to disappear and perhaps does disappear, while life goes on, endlessly renewing itself, perhaps eternally. I had the feeling, and still do, of having come to a vision of these things that is nearly inexpressible in philosophical terms, yet right, immense, and reassuring.

My second examination by Rutkovsky. This time he was a little deflated, and ventured a smile. A brief admonishment for form's sake: "You would be far better advised, I can assure you, to change your attitude and stop treating us as enemies. I tell you this in your own interest . . . ," etc. I heard him out politely, shaking my head.

"All right then, I can see we can do nothing with you. I am going to close the examination. Too bad for you."

"As you will."

Up till now not a word had been written down during the interrogations. Perhaps a shorthand writer was at work, concealed from my view. The inquisitor took out some large sheets of headed paper and began to copy the questions and my replies. There were six insignificant questions and six uninteresting replies. Do you know such-and-such persons? Did you and they take an interest in what happened to the deportees? Yes, of course. We used to meet quite openly, and sent letters and parcels to deported people equally openly. Have you had any subversive conversations with them? Of course not. That will be all. Sign here.

"And my confrontation with Anita Russakova? I want to prove to

you that she is innocent. When she lied about me she lied about herself too. She hasn't an Oppositional idea in her head. She is just a child." My inquisitor's gray eyes gazed at me with a kind of meaningful smile.

"Will it satisfy you if I give you my word that we attach no importance at all to Russakova's evidence, and that this whole business will have no serious consequences for your sister-in-law?"

"Yes."

"Good! That's that, then. The investigation is closed." I asked for news of my wife and son.

"They are doing well." I then asked for books. "What, haven't they given you any yet? It is a piece of unforgivable negligence!"

"No," I said quietly, "it's not negligence . . ."

"You will have some in a few minutes."

"And might I have an hour's exercise walking, as in all the prisons of the civilized world?" Rutkovsky pretended to go into fits of amazement.

"What? Do you mean you haven't had that?"

In the evening a warder brought me a pile of books: a *History of the Moslem World*, an *Economic History of the Directory*, Nogin's *Siberian Memoirs*—riches indeed! The Political Red Cross sent me onions, a little butter, a roll of white bread, and a bit of soap. I knew now that my disappearance had been made known in Paris and that, since they could not wring any signature from me that would have justified a legal condemnation, they wanted to avoid any disagreeable fuss on my account. If I had been only a Russian militant, instead of a French author as well, matters would have taken quite a different turn.

One night, I don't remember at what point in my interrogation, I awoke covered in a cold sweat, feeling an excruciating pain in the lower area of my abdomen—which I have never felt before or since. The pain spread through my insides for a long while, then eased off, leaving me shattered. I must have moaned aloud, for a guard came in and I asked him to call a doctor. A sort of nurse came the next morning, listened without looking at me, and gave me three small white pills which lay on the table and lit up the cell. I pushed aside unworthy thoughts and thought no more of it. But I did remember this detail when, during the trial of Yagoda in 1938, there was mention of the

GPU's special laboratory. A physical warning signal might serve to weaken the morale of the prisoner. Possibly. When there is neither defense nor laws, all is possible.

There was a bright spell of about a week when, because of some error, I am sure, I got a cellmate. He entered dressed in light gray, his tunic unbuttoned at the neck, a handsome man of about thirty-five, of Great Russian peasant stock, sharp features, rebellious tousled brown hair, gray, slightly slanting eyes: Nesterov, ex–chief of staff of the President of the Council of Peoples' Commissars, Alexis Rykov, more recently member of the Planning Commission of the Urals. We were mutually suspicious at first, then became friends. He belonged to the Right Opposition, was not quite sure why he was being arrested, felt apprehensive thinking that they might be trying to extract statements that might compromise Rykov, who was still a member of the Central Committee. He declared he had a profound admiration for Rykov. "They can cut me into little bits but I'll never stop saying that he's one of our greatest revolutionaries!" We spent a few pleasant days discussing Marxism, the future of the USSR, the Party crises, and Tolstoy, of whom he was able to recite whole pages. I remember him lecturing me, stripped to the waist, making the movements of a reaper, an exercise that makes you think you are out in the open. I still remember him saying, "But when, Victor Lvovitch, will we set up the Soviet Institute for Man to carry out scientific research on how to improve the human being, physically and mentally? Only we in the present world can do such a thing. I was talking to Rykov about it . . ." Nesterov was never to come out of prison. He was shot in 1937–38.

If I have lingered so long in describing my examination this is because it was a great help later on, along with what I know from other sources, in enabling me to understand how the great Trials were fabricated.

Alone and at night, I was taken across Moscow in a prison van; I found myself in a bare, brightly lit cell in the old Butyrki jail, a city within the city. I stayed there only for two or three days, provided with books and left untroubled. I reflected that there were plenty more prisons waiting for me to see from the inside. On the second or third day they took me downstairs and locked me in a cell with green-tiled

walls, like a bathroom, next to a spacious corridor. A lad from the streets of Moscow was there with me for a short while and told me how his father and brother had certainly been shot, but he himself had been spared—yes, a very complicated case . . . I could hear people going to and fro in the corridor. A GPU officer bustled in with a little paper slip in his hand. "Read it and sign!" I read it: "*Counterrevolutionary conspiracy. Condemned by the Special Collegium to three years' deportation to Orenburg . . .*" I signed, with anger and joy: angry because I could do nothing, glad because deportation was, after all, an open-air life with the open sky overhead.

Deportees were forming up in the lobby, in a kind of funeral procession. Among them I saw a girl, and a young intellectual with heavy features who shook everyone's hand, introducing himself as "Solovian" and repeating rapidly: "I am not in any Oppositional group: supporter of the General Line . . ." "Best of luck with the General Line," I told him. I was taken by open car, together with the girl and several uniformed men, in the direction of a station. Farewell, Moscow! The city, lit by the spring sun, dazzled my eyes. The girl was a Moscow worker, the wife of an imprisoned Oppositionist and a Left Oppositionist herself; she was being deported to the Volga. She gave me news of some of the women comrades locked up in the female prison, and shared her riches with me: a cube of compressed tea and twenty rubles. She whispered, "Oh, so it's you, Sergo—Sergo for whom we were so afraid! We thought that you would stay in jail for years!" We parted with a hearty embrace in a little station in the Tartar Republic.

Several GPU soldiers guarded the compartment. An extremely stylish, extremely stupid officer, sporting a magnificent lorgnette whose lenses were cut at right angles in the opticians' latest fashion, sat in various poses on the seat opposite, seeking to entice me into political conversation which I evaded, changing the subject. The train shot through the plains of Russia. One night, in a forest filled with nightingales in song, on the banks of the Volga, I experienced a momentary thrill of wonder. I traversed Samara (Kuibyshev) in the small hours, walking through the sleeping streets in the rose-colored light with a soldier carrying a lowered rifle behind me, ready to open fire if I looked like running. At the local GPU headquarters, under the

shower—a blessing indeed—I came across a dark, bearded, emaciated figure who was frisking about nimbly under the jets of hot water.

"You there, with the intellectual's head—who are you?" he asked me in jovial tones. He went on: "I'm a Right Communist myself, Secretary of the —— District, Stalingrad region, served in the Civil War, Ivan Yegorovich Bobrov." I introduced myself in turn. Bobrov had, as punishment for a cruelly accurate report on the course of collectivization in his area, practically died of hunger in some hellish prison cellar where ten of the thirty inmates were at death's door; now he was, like myself, on the way to Orenburg. Our friendship, which was to endure, began in a comfortable cellar furnished with straw.

On the next day a dozen soldiers from the GPU special cavalry, clicking their spurs against the paving stones, took us to the station and stood guard around us in the middle of the public traffic. I was amused to see my reflection on a glass door. I had an unkempt beard, black-gray and bristling, and I had leather and fur clothing on, though it was the height of summer. Bobrov was the perfect model of a tramp —jacket in holes at the elbows, trousers in tatters and gone at the knees, and lean as a scarecrow. Our eyes were merry and proud. The folk around viewed us with sympathy, and a peasant woman asked our escort to allow her to offer us some wheatcakes. They were delicious. The NCO in charge of our escort took us into his confidence. He was serving in the prisoner transfer service. "It's like continual combat, citizens. I can't get married. Back from Sakhalin, I'm off to Kamtchatka with other clients. And on and on like that. There are some pretty hard bits, too. One night I lock up my cars at a station in Siberia and I say to my mates: let's see if we can find some pretty girls in the village. Instead, there's an order waiting for me at the station: shoot So-and-so! All I've got is three hours to carry out that order! Find the right place, nobody should notice anything. I'm leading my bloke away, toward the brush, he starts to suspect something; and now he's rolling on the ground and I have to put a bullet in his head as best I can and then bury him in the dark, so nobody notices anything..." This disciplined young Communist stole our ration of sugar and herring.

Orenburg, on the Ural River, is a metropolis of the steppes, solitary under a glorious sky, on the line from Kuibyshev to Tashkent.

Although it is geographically situated on the border between Europe and Asia, it belongs to Asia. Up to 1925 it had been the capital of the Autonomous Republic of the Kazakhs (or Khirghiz), a nomadic people of Central Asia, Turkish in origin and Sunni Moslems, who were still divided into three great hordes. Since then Kazakhstan has become one of the eleven federal republics of the USSR, with its capital at Alma-Ata. Under the Tsars, Orenburg, the central market for the copious livestock of the steppes, had been a wealthy city, crowned with fifteen or so Orthodox churches and several large mosques. There in the Civil War, the working class had fought battles of legendary ferocity, marked by frightful massacres of the poor, against a Cossack ataman, General Dutov. During the NEP, the town had recovered its substantial prosperity, thanks to the steppe from which it drew its life. When we arrived in June 1933, a hideous famine was raging there amidst the destruction and decay.

There was hardly any vegetation, apart from a shady wood on the other bank of the Ural, strewn with silvery leaves. It was a lowly town, whose streets were lined with charming little houses built in peasant style. Tall, raw-boned camels trundled along gloomily under their burdens. There were two central thoroughfares of a European type, the Sovietskaya and the Kooperativnaya, and a number of pretentious buildings in that Imperial style, with massive white pillars, which the governors-general of old times planted everywhere. All the churches, except for one in the nearby Cossack township of Vorstadt (or Orenpossad), had lately been destroyed. The rubble of the dynamited cathedral formed an islet of quaint little rocks in the middle of one of the squares. There was a little old white church on the hill over the river, which had associations with Pugachev's rebellion of 1774; not even this had been spared. All the priests and the bishops had been deported to the north; religion functioned illegally. The synagogue was either closed or demolished; in the absence of a kosher butcher, the Jews were now refusing to eat meat. On the other hand, the mosques had not been damaged, for fear of provoking the Moslem masses, with whom the authorities had quite enough trouble already. The finest mosque had been converted into a Khirghiz high school. One or two Christian churches, their domes split open and their

crosses obliterated, were used as goods warehouses by the cooperatives, but there were no goods in them. The vast bazaar of the caravans, which not long ago had been glutted with merchandise, was now deserted, and the caravanserai was empty. Beside these ruins a new city was beginning to grow, with barracks and military schools. Cavalry, tank units, and the Air Force filled the town with well-clad, well-fed young men. Numerous airfields extended far into the adjoining steppe, the Flying School was housed in brand-new buildings of red brick, and if you passed young women in the street with plump cheeks and gaudy silk dresses you knew that they were the wives of airmen. The State retail trade was at death's door: neither cloth nor paper, shoes nor food was to be found in the shops. In all the three years I spent there, no shoes were sent to Orenburg, except to the cooperatives reserved for the Party and the GPU. There were several technical schools for the training of agronomists, veterinarians, and teachers; a garment factory; a railway repair workshop; a number of prisons, all packed out; and a small concentration camp. I often saw a great herd of men passing under my windows, ragged and mostly barefoot, surrounded by watchdogs and soldiers with lowered rifles. These were the labor brigades of the penitentiary department; we dubbed them, sarcastically, "the enthusiasts' brigades," since some of them were actually called by that name and took part in "Socialist labor emulation." An immense, flea-ridden market ran out from the town into the steppe, bounded by the Moslem cemetery (now occupied by abandoned children and bandits), the dismal garment factory, the cavalry school, a maternity hospital, and the endless sands.

The GPU issued us with bread cards, which were valid from the beginning of the current month (a stroke of luck). "It is forbidden to leave the town, except to go out for fresh air in the woods; from now on you may find any work and lodging that you can; only no employment can be taken up without our authorization."

We thought that the light from the sky was rich and pellucid as nowhere else, and so it was. The town itself gave the impression of being sun-scorched, exciting, picturesque, and overwhelmed with heat, poverty, and sand. We went on to the barber's and acquired heads of civilized hair again; a dark-skinned urchin stole my last three rubles

off me; we hocked my leather-and-fur overcoat at the municipal pawnshop for eighty rubles; and with that our experience of hunger began. The room in the Peasant's Hostelry cost two rubles a night, and the sheets were so filthy that after inspecting them by the light of a match I decided to sleep in my clothes. The inn had an enormous four-sided courtyard, littered with carts, horses, camels, and nomads who slept there, whole families of them, on mats close to their beasts. It was, in the delightful coolness of early morning, a touching spectacle. At that hour the Khirghiz families had risen, which is to say that they would be squatting in silence or busy at their morning toilet: biblical ancients, mothers with Mongol eyes suckling their babies, children of all ages cleaning themselves of fleas in deep concentration, many cracking the lice between their teeth. It often looked as if they ate them, saying, "You eat me and I eat you." A row of crouching Asiatics would be relieving themselves in the latrines and I noticed that several of them excreted blood. Rags, rags everywhere. Some slender girls stood out from the mob, because of their perfect beauty, like Israelite or Persian princesses.

I heard shouting from the street, and then a shower of vigorous knocks on the door. "Quick, Victor Lvovich, open up!" Bobrov was coming back from the bakery, with two huge four-kilo loaves of black bread on his shoulders. He was surrounded by a swarm of hungry children, hopping after the bread like sparrows, clinging on his clothes, beseeching: "A little bit, uncle, just a little bit!" They were almost naked. We threw them some morsels, over which a pitched battle promptly began. The next moment, our barefooted maidservant brought boiling water, unasked, for us to make tea. When she was alone with me for a moment, she said to me, her eyes smiling, "Give me a pound of bread and I'll give you the signal in a minute... And mark my words, citizen, I can assure you that I don't have the syphilis, no, not me..." Bobrov and I decided to go out only by turns, so as to keep an eye on the bread.

We took lodgings in what had once been a prosperous peasant's house, still clean, with the widow of the chief of a proletarian artillery brigade which had won a famous battle hereabouts in 1918... Two kids aged seven and nine, bold as brass, were playing in the courtyard.

I offered the smallest one a little bit of sugar. He held it in his hand, took a good look, and said, "It's not salt? Can you really eat it?" I assured him, he tasted it and spat it out pulling a face. "It burns. It's nasty!" I realized that he had never tasted sugar. We had dried what remained of our bread. These brats, who were as agile as monkeys, climbed onto the roof while we were out, got into the loft by a trapdoor, searched out where we had cunningly hidden our rusks, and ate them. We made the mistake of complaining to the widow and the house was filled with heart-rending cries. Their mother was whipping them with frenzy and told us when we tried to intervene, "They do the same thing here at home. Let them go and steal in the market!" A few days later, the younger was whipped by the elder for having stolen again.

Bobrov and I would meander through the town and the woods, as hungry as those children. One ruble got you a bowl of greasy soup in the restaurant where little girls waited for you to finish eating so as to lick your plate and glean your bread crumbs. We rationed ourselves strictly, gaining time until work should come our way, or else the relief I hoped to receive from Leningrad or Paris. Twice a week we would buy bunches of unripe onions and some mutton bones from the market, and make a soup, which smelled delicious, over a wood fire in the courtyard. Then we would lie down and let it digest, in a state of positive bliss. Once we fell ill after the feast. Our usual nourishment consisted of dried bread and sweetened tea made in a samovar; we owed this last to the compressed tea I had been given by the girl comrade I had met at the Butyrki prison. At long last we had some news: Bobrov, that his father had died of hunger in the village; I, that my wife was getting better and would be sending me a parcel . . . We kept ourselves in good spirits, talking endlessly about problems, raking over memories of the revolution, amused to find that all our conversations would inevitably conclude with something like, "Hey, Victor Lvovich, or Ivan Yegorovich, how about a cabbage soup?" We would stop pensively in front of those little stalls where they sold hardboiled eggs at one ruble twenty each, a price that only the military could afford. For us, a hardboiled egg was a genuine object of contemplation.

Among the ruins of churches, in abandoned porches, on the edge of the steppe, or under the crags by the Ural, we could see Khirghiz

families lying heaped together, dying of hunger. One evening I gathered up from the ground of the deserted marketplace a child burning with fever; he was moaning, but the folk who stood around did not dare to touch him, for fear of contagion. I diagnosed a simple case of hunger and took him off to the militia post, holding him by his frail, boiling wrist. I fetched him a glass of water and a morsel of bread from my place; the effect on the lad was that of a small but instantaneous miracle.

"What do you want us to do with him?" asked the soldiers. "Take him to the Children's Home." "But they're running away from there, because they're starving to death!" When I returned home, I discovered that someone had stolen my stock of bread that was to last several days.

There were Khirghiz lying under the sun on waste ground, and it was hard to tell if some of them were alive or dead. People passed by without looking their way: poor people, hurrying and shabby; functionaries, military men, their bourgeois-looking womenfolk; in brief all those we termed "the satisfied 8%" The market, bordered by sky and desert and invaded by the sands, teemed with an incongruous multitude. There people traded back and forth to each other, chiefly in the perpetual bric-a-brac of poverty: lamps patched up a hundred times and still giving out smuts, if no light; precious lamp chimneys of the wrong sizes, broken stoves, nomads' garments, stolen watches which went for no longer than five minutes (I knew experts who, out of three watches and a stock of odds and ends, would make four...), livestock. The Khirghiz had long arguments around a haughty, regally white camel. Troglodytic old women, their skin so brown as to appear black, practiced palmistry. A weird Turkmenian in a turban divined the future by throwing goats' vertebrae upon engravings from an erotic book in French published in Amsterdam in Voltaire's time. Here, even on the worst days, one could find bread, butter, and meat, all at outrageous prices and light-years away from any hygienic regulation. Famished thieves of all ages and all varieties from as far away as Turkestan and Pamir strayed in these crowds, snatching a carrot or an onion from your hands and popping it immediately down their throats. My wife witnessed the following piece of thievery: a housewife had just bought a pound of butter costing fifteen rubles (three

days' wages for a skilled worker) when an Asiatic smartly nipped it from her hands and made off. He was pursued and caught easily enough, but he curled up on the earth like a ball and, for all the blows from fists or stones that rained on him from above, ate the butter. They left him lying there, bloody but full.

For the rest, it was a decently managed town. Three cinemas, and a traveling theater in the summer, of a fair standard, and an ornamental garden, called Topoli (the Lime Trees). About 160,000 inhabitants, a tenth of them unloaded there by the GPU. A healthy climate: five months of extremely harsh winter with temperatures reaching minus forty-two degrees; five months of extremely hot summer, with hot spells of up to forty degrees. All the year round, violent winds from the steppes, the savage burans, which in winter whirled the snow around and heaped it into white dunes in the squares, and in summer worked up squalls of warm sand. Among the poor inhabitants at least seventy percent suffered from marsh fever; naturally there was no quinine. I have seen the same ague shaking the grandmother of eighty and the suckling baby, and they did not die of it.

The average salaries ranged between eighty and one hundred and fifty rubles. As a result, the women who worked at the clothing factory tried to pick up aviators in the evening. At least half of the town's poor, from school students to old women, were alcoholics; on revolutionary holidays the whole town was drunk. At night, people used to barricade themselves inside their houses with iron bars and tree trunks. Every year several petty Party functionaries were killed at night in the lightless streets... Nevertheless, the population was hardworking, the youth studious, a decent people on the whole who never gave up hope, readily grasped the subtext of official decrees, and followed with genuine interest events in Austria, Spain, or Ethiopia, manifesting each day a tenacious capacity to survive.

When I first arrived, there were about fifteen political deportees: Social-Revolutionaries, Zionists, anarchists, ex-Oppositional capitulators. Orenburg was considered a privileged spot for deportation. The GPU only used it for leading figures, and for convicts who already had behind them years of imprisonment or exile in other parts. There were in fact a number of grades of deportation. I knew men

who had lived inside the Arctic Circle in settlements of five houses; others again at Turgai in the Kazakhstan desert, where the primitive Kazakhs dwelt in hovels of mud, practically without water for five months of the year. In this town of ours L. Gerstein, of the Social-Revolutionary Party's Central Committee, was living out his last years undisturbed, and the GPU was collecting influential "Trotskyists," those known to be intransigent, for purposes whose very obscurity made us anxious. Soon there was a whole little fraternal group of us, in excellent spirits. An old Georgian Menshevik, Ramishvili, arrived, now in the fourteenth year of his captivity; then another Menshevik, Georgi Dimitrievich Kuchin, a late member of his party's Central Committee; and some ex-Oppositionists of the Right, who, having become supporters of the General Line, had been high in authority only the day before—with these last we never exchanged a word.

Life under deportation was characterized by its instability. The GPU made up exiles' colonies in a fairly homogeneous composition, so as to allow a limited intellectual activity to arise, foment divisions and betrayals, and then, under some easily arranged pretext, pack the irreconcilables off to prison or transfer them to regions more squalid and obscure. The deportee, dependent in regard to letters from relatives, work, and medical attention, lived literally at the mercy of a few officials. He was obliged to report to the GPU daily, or every three, five, or seven days as the case might be. No sooner would he get his life organized a little than it would all be undone by unemployment, prison, or transfer. It was an endless cat-and-mouse game. The deportee who repented and apologized politely to the Central Committee would (though not always) be better treated and find a comfortable job as an economist or librarian, but the others would boycott him. For example, a woman who had been a Trotskyist and was the wife of a capitulator still in jail was given the task of purging the public library, i.e., of withdrawing the works of Trotsky, Riazanov, Preobrazhensky, and a host of others, in accordance with lists that were issued from time to time; the books were not burned after the Nazi pattern, but sent for pulping to provide material for fresh paper.

It was clearly indicated to me that I would receive no work except by seeking the favor of the GPU. Once I went to discuss a possible job

in the Ural Gold Trust, and had the following fragment of conversation with the local head of the secret police:

"Have you any intention of seeking readmission to the Party?"

"None at all."

"Or of appealing against your sentence to the Special Collegium of the Interior?"

"None at all."

Any employment was now out of the question. I was determined to fight back. I had a historical work, three novels, and various other publications on sale in Paris. In Orenburg there was a *Torgsin** shop where even at the height of famine one could buy, at prices sometimes below the world level, foodstuffs and manufactured goods on which the whole town gazed greedily. The only acceptable payment for them was in gold, silver, or foreign currency. I saw Khirghiz and muzhiks coming to the counter with ancient necklaces fashioned from Persian coinage or embossed silver icon frames; these objets d'art and rare coins were bought by the weight of metal in them and paid for in flour, cloth, or hide. Former bourgeois now in exile brought along their false teeth. On 300 francs a month, the equivalent of about fifteen dollars, I was able both to live myself and to provide a livelihood for some comrade or other who might just be out of prison. By bartering I was able to obtain wood for the winter and dairy products. In the market, one *Torgsin* ruble was currently worth between thirty-five and forty paper rubles; this meant that a wage of eighty rubles was the equivalent of two convertible rubles at world market prices, or about one dollar...

I rented, on the outskirts of the Vorstadt district facing the infinite steppe, half of a house that had once been comfortable, but that now was in ruins. The landlady's husband was in prison. Daria Timofeevna herself was tall, thin, bony, with a face as hard as a character from Holbein's *Dance of Death*, and made a very meager living by reading palms. A grandmother who was periodically shaken by malaria attacks lay shivering on the hallway floor at the mercy of the flies; by night she made balls of chalk to sell at the market. A twelve-year-old boy, also suffering from malaria but intelligent and athletic, stole whatever he could lay his hands on to eat from the house and elsewhere. Whenever she had made three rubles, Daria Timofeevna would

Vlady's painting of the house in Orenburg

buy a bit of flour and a bottle of vodka and drink till delirium or oblivion. My neighbors lived apparently on the very edge of the grave yet by constant miracles of endurance not one of them succumbed in the three years I was there. Three women clung to life in the cold cellars, and on days of great chill burned cattle dung for what little heat it gave off. Two of the women were old, but the third was young, a pretty, neurotic girl whose husband had abandoned her and their two children. She would lock the kids up when she went to market in search of God knows what pittance. They'd press their snotty little faces between the planks of the door and whimper piteously: *Golodno!* (We're hungry!) As I fed them a bit of food, the mothers of other children would come to reproach me for giving rice or bread only to those two: "Ours are starving, too!" There was nothing I could do.

My wife arrived from Leningrad with some books; the GPU gave me back my manuscripts and uncompleted works, as well as my typewriter. I decided to work on, just as though I had some kind of future—which, after all, was still possible. It was an even chance whether I would survive or vanish into the jails. At all costs I would, in opposition to despotism, keep this irrevocable minimum of my rights and my dignity: the right to think freely. I began to write two books at once, one of them an autobiographical work on the struggles of my

youth in Paris, and to gather notes on the history of the years 1918–20. I was in the terrain of Chapayev's* partisans, and I met some of the survivors of that era. While their glory was being hymned throughout the world in Soviet films, they were just scraping a living, alcoholic and demoralized—but wonderful personalities all the same. I studied that particular phase in the Civil War and the folk world around me, which, though primitive, had much of human value.

In particular, I was a close observer of a case of banditry, which amounted to no more than the spontaneous violence of a few youngsters who, in a drunken condition, had thought it gallant to have a fight to the death. I saw the most formidable of these youths being tried in a workers' club. He had several deaths on his conscience and had no clear idea of what he was being charged with. His name was Sudakov, and they shot him. Around his name I noted the phenomenon of legend-making. I left the court an hour before the verdict, it being a stifling August night. On the following day several bystanders told me, in great excitement and with all the details, that Sudakov had escaped. He had saluted the audience by bowing, in the old Russian fashion, to the four points of the compass, and then jumped through a window and disappeared in the park outside. People had seen it and the whole town was talking of the affair—only, none of it was true. When they came back to their senses, people declared that Sudakov had been pardoned; then the GPU sent his clothes to his family...

The dry, scorching summers and the glaring, relentless winters made every hour one of struggle. The first priority was to obtain wood. The stupid regulations of the Soviet, and the GPU's habit of requisitioning on some pretext or other any peasant homes that were at all comfortable, forced people to abandon the big, well-built houses and build new ones, barely habitable by a single family and so forming no temptation for the military. A big house would be left to rot, then permission would be obtained to demolish it (in view of its condition), and the timber in it was sold for firewood—a brilliant transaction! I followed the smart example of the experts and kept myself warm by this technique. The area covered by housing diminished regularly, while the town's excess population increased. Through the snowstorms my son and I would drag toboggans loaded with the

usual sack of potatoes or drum of paraffin bought on the black market. On some mornings the snow's onslaught on the house would bury it almost completely, and we had to fight it with our shovels to get the doors and windows free. Then too we had to chop and saw the wood, and hide it in case it was stolen. I made wooden barricades that we piled in front of the blocked front door. We had to go and find our bread at the far end of town, sometimes only to push our noses up to a tiny notice: *The bread ration for the 10th is canceled.* At the rationing office a poster announced: "Grandparents have no right to food cards." All the same, people managed to keep those "useless mouths" alive.

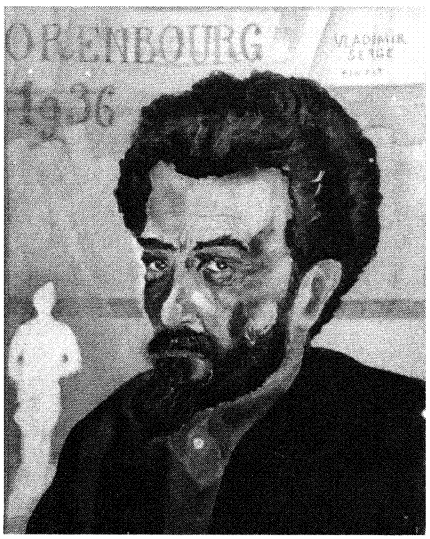
Besides this, we used to go on long ski trips over the frozen Ural and in the woods. The iridescent snow would, every so often, show the tracks of wild beasts, which we proceeded to trail. At the age of thirteen my son had become a first-rate skier, though he had no skis, properly speaking, only old planks fastened to his feet. He was at school, where they had one textbook between three pupils and three exercise books per pupil per session; here the little Cossacks used to fight one another with knives and go marauding in the market. The little *Frantzuz* (Frenchman) acquitted himself well, without a knife, and was respected by all. As a deportee's son, he was a source of anxiety to the Communist senior staff, who actually upbraided him for not breaking off relations with his father. For a short while he was expelled from school for declaring in the social science lesson that in France the trade unions functioned freely. The headmaster of the school carpeted me for the "anti-Soviet activities" that I was encouraging in my son. "But," I told him, "it is a fact that trade union freedom and even political freedom exist in France; there is nothing anti-Soviet about that."

"I find it hard to believe you," replied the headmaster, "and in any case it is our duty to impress upon our children that true liberty exists here and not in the capitalist dictatorship of the so-called democratic countries."

At Orenburg the GPU had gathered (doubtless for the purpose of working up a "case" at some time) half a dozen deportees from the Left Opposition, together with a few young sympathizers. We were a family circle. They were men and women of a truly wonderful stamp. In my novel *Midnight in the Century* I have taken some pains to recap-

ture the spiritual atmosphere of deportation. Journeying over the years from prison to prison, from exile to exile, tormented by privation, these comrades kept their revolutionary faith, their good spirits, their sparkling political intelligence. Fanya Upstein, less than thirty years old, was an Odessa intellectual, a devoted student. Lydia Svalova was a worker from Perm, still young, who had been deported to the White Sea coast for raising her voice about wages in a meeting; in the north she had been put to work as a wagoner. Lisa Senatskaya, a kindly and steadfast person, was the wife of Vassily Pankratov, an Oppositionist in jail for the last five years, and had herself been deported for refusing to divorce him, "a fact which proves her solidarity with her husband." They were expecting to be reunited here.

The men had all fought in the Civil War. Boris Mikhailovich Eltsin, a Bolshevik since 1903, and a member of the Opposition's "Leading Center," was a little man with heart trouble and rheumatism; his powerful head was topped with black hair which stood out in rebel-



Boris Eltsin painted by Vlady, 1936

lious tufts: black chin beard and mustache, swarthy skin, deep wrinkles, lively eyes, and a thoughtful, spontaneously sarcastic way of

talking. Over fifty-five, he came to us from Suzdal prison, where he had bargained with Stalin.

He had been deported at first to Feodossia in the Crimea, along with a son who was dying of tuberculosis, but the climate there had been considered too easy for a man so obdurate. Hegel's *Collected Works* were his constant companion. I used to see him having his dinner, a few potatoes and half a herring; he would then make tea, like the old student he was, and at last smile, bright-eyed, and say: "Tonight I read a page of Hegel over again: it's a tremendous stimulant for the mind!" He remarked too: "Our unity is the work of the GPU; in fact we have as many tendencies as there are militants. I don't find this at all objectionable." His son, Victor Borisovich, was deported to Archangel after spending five years in prison.

Vassily Feodorovich Pankratov was sent to us after release from a five-year stay in an Isolator (Suzdal, I think). Aged forty, well-set shoulders and head, in vigorous trim, his features athletic and clean-cut as his nature. Once a sailor in the fighting fleet, he had helped to lead the revolutionary movement at Kronstadt in 1917; after that he was in the Civil War, and headed the GPU at Vladikavkaz (Northern Caucasus); imprisoned in 1928 for three years; when these three years had expired, the GPU asked him if his ideas had changed, and upon his replying in the negative, added another two years to his term. It was only after the prison inmates threatened to go on hunger strike to the death that the secret Collegium stopped doling out increased sentences of this kind, and Pankratov recovered his liberty—by being deported. His wife, Lisa, had waited for him; in our midst they found happiness together for a little while.

Chanaan Markovich Pevzner, an economist from the Finance Commissariat, had been seriously maimed in the Manchurian campaign. He had done only four years in the Isolator owing to the pitiable condition of his left arm, which had seven bullets in it and dangled like a rag. The GPU arranged employment for him in the regional treasury, to enable him to deal with an incipient attack of scurvy by eating his fill, or as near as might be. Pevzner was young, lively, a strong swimmer, and a pessimist. "We are in for years of it," he kept saying. "I do not believe that the Terror will die down: the eco-

nomic situation demands it." He had the sharp, bold features of a fighter from old Israel.

Vassily Mikhailovich Chernykh, lately a high GPU official in the Ural area, had, in bygone days, captured Rostov with a little army of miners, sailors, and students. He had come to us from the prison at Verkhne-Uralsk. Tall, the very model of a timberman in the Nordic forests with his powerful arms, toughened face, blond mane, and mocking eyes, he was a warmhearted warrior with a serious head on his shoulders. He argued that, through the absence of an intelligent and decisive leadership, the Petrograd Soviet had missed the chance of a revolution in February–March 1917, at the time of the autocracy's collapse, and that power should have been seized at that time, thus saving a year of semi-bourgeois Kerenskyism. Chernykh was (like myself) one of the tribe of revisionists, who maintained that all ideas, as well as all recent history, should be reviewed from top to bottom. On this issue the Opposition was divided roughly into two halves: there were the revisionists and there were the doctrinaires, themselves subdivided into the orthodox, the extreme Left, and the followers of the theory that the USSR was establishing State capitalism.

Ivan Byk came to us from the concentration camp on the Solovietsky Islands. A young man, he had fought in the Ukraine, campaigned for the Workers' Opposition, and undergone confinement at Verkhne-Uralsk: there, he had been one of the organizers of a widespread hunger strike against the "doubling" of sentences by administrative decision. The strikers did drink water, which enabled them to hold out for longer; on the eighteenth day the strike committee was carrying on as usual. The formidable Andreyeva, who was in charge of political prisons, came to negotiate with the committee. She began by threatening them with forced labor. Byk answered her, "If you're afraid of labor, I'm not: I'm a worker." When they left this meeting, the three members of the strike committee had blankets thrown over their heads, were trussed up and transported they knew not where, ending up in a railroad car on their way to the Solovietsky. "Now, your strike is over, whether you like it or not. So, drink some milk, eat some cheese," their guards said. The committee asked permission to deliberate and decided that while the train was still in the Ural region they

had to consider themselves as still on duty... They only took nourishment on the next day.

In the concentration camp Byk was informed that, in a short telegram published in the newspapers, Christian Rakovsky had announced his support for the Central Committee "to stand against the war-danger side by side with the Party." A conciliator by nature, Byk thought this quite reasonable, and accepted Rakovsky's formulation of "a united front." He was flown to the Butyrki prison in Moscow. "You are in favor of a united front between the Opposition and the Central Committee?" "Yes." "Rakovsky goes further than that... Read this article of his. If you sign it, we release you." After reading the article Byk simply asked to be sent back to the concentration camp. When he had finished his sentence, the GPU passed him to us.

Boris Ilyich Lakovitsky, Muscovite worker, illiterate ex–chief of staff of a partisan army, another handsome Israelite warrior, bearer of several scars, headstrong and always in conflict with the GPU, which kept him out of work or gave him work under such conditions that one day he went to tell the head of the secret police, "I know what your game is, respected comrade. You are setting me up for a little sabotage trial, aren't you? Not as daft as that! Go and check for yourself the defects of the clothing factory; I assure you, everything there is defective!" We always helped him out as best we could at times of grinding poverty. We were unable to protect him either from his own too impetuous nature nor from the malaria that every now and then laid him low. I spent a day with him in the freezing snow near the wreck of a building where the Cossacks of the Urals used to keep their standards and trophies of war. Children came out of the dark, gaping cellars: "Uncles! There are bodies inside!" We went down into the darkness and found, with the help of matches, a young Kyrgyz, his skull bashed in and, in pitch darkness, wedged in a corner, a sick man groaning whom we dared not approach for fear of the fleas. We got them both picked up. "Let's eat our sacred little potatoes, now," said Lakovitsky gaily. "Men in these Socialist times must be hard and have a good appetite." After a few altercations with the Secret Service, as he was finishing his term of deportation they sent him to a "camp for reeducation through work" in Central Asia.

Alexei Semionovich Santalov, a proletarian from the Putilov Works, had been in all the revolutions of Petrograd for twenty years and more. An educated, thoughtful person, but sluggish in outward appearance, he used to defend trade union rights and factory legislation in whatever workshop he found himself: a serious offense. "A spineless lot of youngsters, this working class of today!" he would say. "They've never seen an electric lightbulb in their lives—it'll take them ten years or more before they get round to demanding decent lavatories!" The GPU deferred to him, but he eventually landed in trouble. During a revolutionary festival Santalov got a little drunk and wandered into a workers' club, where he stopped short before the Leader's portrait. "You've got to admit it," he cried noisily, "a fine face he has, this gravedigger of the Revolution!" He was arrested and we never saw him again.

I have described these men because I am grateful to them for having existed, and because they incarnated an epoch. Most probably all of them have perished.

Ch——, a history professor in Moscow, had been arrested because it was imagined that certain allusions could be heard in his lectures on the French Revolution (Thermidor!). He was so seriously ill that we asked the GPU to send him to a clinic in Moscow. Our demand was granted. He came back to us far less shaky and bringing news: Trotsky, of whom we had heard absolutely nothing for a long time, was founding the Fourth International.* With what forces? with what parties? we wondered. Ch——, on behalf of some mysterious "comrades" whom he had, so he said, managed to contact while in hospital, suggested to me that Eltsin and I should establish an illegal committee of the Opposition: "We need a brain!" We were sitting on the steps of my house, facing the steppe. I asked him questions about the comrades in Moscow, trying to discover their identity; I looked deep into his eyes, and thought to myself: "You, my friend, are an agent provocateur!" I explained to him that even when shut away in prisons we still embodied a basic principle of life and liberty, and that we had no need to organize ourselves into clandestine committees. His attempt failed, then, but he was pardoned some time later. I had been right. If I had listened to him I should be lying dead at this very hour, with a little hole in the back of my neck.

The winter of 1934–35 was frightful, despite the lessening of the famine towards the New Year, the abolition of bread rationing, and the revaluation of the ruble at the equivalent of a kilo of black bread. For a long while my wife, a victim to crises of insanity, had been away from me for treatment in Leningrad.

I was left alone with my son, and the GPU suddenly cut off my supplies. A consignment of money posted from Paris via the *Torgsin* was intercepted and "lost." I asked the GPU for work, and the Secret Service ironically offered me a night watchman's job, adding by the way that it was not certain that I could be given a permit to carry arms and this would be contrary to regulations. I now understood that a directive was out to choke me to death—or else that the protest campaign in France on my behalf was annoying Moscow and so they were trying to break me. Try, try again! Our morale was excellent. We had passionately followed the battles in the Asturias in October 1934; in the talks that I gave in the woods by the River Ural, I proclaimed the Spanish Revolution to my comrades, and I was not wrong. A great popular victory in the West could save us by blowing a gust of fresh air across the USSR. This news coincided with rumors of a political amnesty; the GPU officials told us that Trotsky was begging to come back, offering to submit to the Central Committee. I learned later that Lozovsky was likewise announcing my own impending submission to my comrades in Paris; this, he said, would mean the end of the "Victor Serge affair." Rakovsky had just surrendered, but this did not worry us. We told each other, "He is getting old, and they've played a classic trick on him, showing him confidential documents about the approach of war..." Meanwhile, most of the comrades were being thrown out of work by the GPU.

Liuba painted by her son, Vlady, Orenburg c. 1935

My son and I rationed ourselves to the limit, so that all we fed on now was a little black bread and "egg soup," which I made to last two

days with some sorrel and just one egg. Fortunately we did have wood. Soon I began to suffer from boils. Pevzner, famished and homeless besides, came to sleep at our house, bedridden by attacks of a strange ague. Later we discovered that he had scarlet fever. An enormous anthrax tumor under my left breast laid me flat on my back, and I saw the abscess devouring me. The GPU refused to send me a physician, and the doctor from the Vorstadt dispensary, a young, overworked little woman, tended us as best she could, with no medicines at her disposal. Rumor grew in the neighborhood that Pevzner was dying (and indeed he was delirious), and that I was dead. The GPU woke up, since they had to answer for us to the Central Collegium. One morning, the most eminent surgeon in town, a tireless and remarkably talented neurotic, burst into the house, wagged his head, and said, "Don't worry, I'll save you," and had me conveyed immediately to the hospital. Pevzner was already there, in the huts reserved for contagious patients. This was a little after Kirov's assassination.

I left for the hospital lying in straw on a low sledge, on a day dazzling with sunshine and snow. A bearded, wrinkled peasant would turn around to me every now and then to inquire if I was being jolted too much. My son walked along beside the sledge. I could not move an inch; all I could see was a luminous blue of surpassing purity. Vassily Pankratov had just disappeared; he was arrested obscurely, leaving his young wife pregnant. The comrades thought that my condition would prevent my being arrested, but that I would be imprisoned immediately upon discharge from hospital. Such was the fate of Pevzner, whom we never saw again. Once he was convalescent, policemen waited for him at the exit to the huts and took him away to the cellars of the GPU.

Pevzner and Pankratov, in common with many other notable deportees who had recently been let out of Isolators and again put under arrest, were to be enrolled in a "prison conspiracy," invented in the panic over the Kirov affair. We heard no more of them, except that after several months Pankratov arrived at the prison of Verkhne-Uralsk, which held Kamenev and Zinoviev. His message to us said only one thing: "The investigation has been frightful. Nothing we have so far experienced can be compared with what is going on. Be ready for anything!" And ready we were.

I no longer know how many weeks I spent in the "gangrenous" department at Orenburg's surgical hospital, during the bitterest part of winter. The hospital was run as efficiently as the general destitution permitted; what it treated primarily was poverty. It was filled with cases of sickness or accident casualties whose true sickness or accident lay in chronic undernourishment aggravated by alcoholism. The worker who lived on sour cabbage soup, without fat content, would acquire an abscess as a result of a simple bruise, the abscess would be followed by septic inflammation and this, since the hospital fed its inmates very poorly, would last indefinitely. Children were covered in cold sores. Whole wards were full of peasants with frozen limbs, empty bellies, and worn and threadbare clothes that offered small resistance to the cold.

Disinfectants, anesthetics, analgesics, gauze, bandages, even iodine came in inadequate quantities, so that dressings that should have been changed daily were only attended to every three days. In the bandaging room I heard arguments and bargaining going on among the nurses: "Give me back the three yards of gauze I lent you the day before yesterday, I've a patient here who can't wait any longer!" "But you must know, the delivery they promised hasn't come . . ." The same bandages were washed and used over and over again. I saw gangrenous flesh being torn from the frozen limbs with pincers; indescribable scars resulted. To treat me the doctors had to ask for vaccines and drugs from the GPU's privileged infirmary, the only one that went short of nothing. True, I was in the hospital for the poor—along with Chapayev's old partisans. Official, technical, and military personnel had special clinics reserved for their use. The medical and ancillary staff, which was generally very underpaid, was extraordinarily conscientious.

In the long winter evenings, the convalescing patients used to gather around a big stove in the passageway, and sing, underhandedly, a tragic ballad of love and brigandage; its refrain was:

And money, money all the time:
With no money, you can't live . . .

I got better, largely I believe because the GPU allowed the next dispatch of money to reach me, and so I was able to buy butter, sugar, and

rice at the *Torgsin*. I shall never forget the way in which some of the sick people gazed at me when I was brought such food, or their deference when they took their share of it. Nor, for that matter, shall I forget how on the most wretched of our days of misery we all heard a radio broadcast from a regional meeting of kolkhoz workers. Passionate voices went on endlessly thanking the Leader for "the good life we lead," and twenty or so patients tormented by hunger, half of them kolkhoz workers themselves, listened to it all in silence.

Contrary to all our predictions, I did not disappear, but returned home. This was due to the stubborn battle that was raging around my name in France. Militants and intellectuals were demanding that either I be released or my deportation be justified. They were promised that I would have a proper trial—and the trial never took place; they were promised documentation on the case—and no documents were forthcoming. They were promised that I would be freed forthwith, and I was not. At a time when Soviet policy was seeking the support of left-wing circles in France, it was all rather embarrassing.

One freezing, snowy morning, in the spring of 1935, there was a soft knock at my door. I opened it and saw two women wearing hoods who looked at me imploringly. "We are from Leningrad and we were given your address." "Come in, comrades!" The young woman replied, smilingly, "We are not comrades, we are ex-bourgeois!" "Welcome, then, citizens!" They warmed themselves and then settled in my house. From them I learnt of the mass banishments of Leningrad, fifty to one hundred thousand deportees, a whole population of people related to the former bourgeoisie sent off to the Volga region, Central Asia, the north—women, children, old people, technicians, artists, without distinction. Pregnant women gave birth on route, the old were buried at nameless railway stations. All were ruined, of course, having had to sell their possessions in haste and having lost their jobs. Following the Kirov affair, Stalin had sent a message to the Leningrad Regional Committee upbraiding them for not having cleansed the city of the old "imperial" bourgeoisie. The "cleanup" began at once. The men were usually sent to concentration camps. The young woman I took in was the wife of a famous Soviet architect, young and distinguished, the builder, I believe, of the GPU building in Stalingrad; now he was in a camp. His mother was also deported, because she was his mother...

Just to Orenburg there came three or four hundred families, about one thousand people. We used to go to watch the "trains from Leningrad" pass through the station on their way to Central Asia. The GPU gave an allowance of thirty rubles a month to the old; it did not give it for long. I heard of crazy instances, like where the wife of a Communist was deported for having been married, ten years before, to an ex-officer! Compared to us, the Leningrad deportees were well-off: they were allowed to work, the majority soon managed to settle in. There were countless tragedies, but our vast Russia does not linger; life goes on.

Among these deportees, I met Doctor Kerenskaya, sister of the former head of the Provisional Government of revolutionary Russia, Alexander Kerensky. "What!" people would exclaim. "Are you still using that name? It's extremely risky!" She replied that for her whole life she had only looked after the sick and that here or elsewhere she would find a way of being useful. Indeed, thanks to the influx of deported doctors, the number of medical personnel in the region doubled.

I am convinced that at the end of 1934, just at the moment when Kirov was murdered, the Politburo was entering upon a policy of normality and relaxation. The kolkhoz system had been modified so far as to permit the farmers to keep their private property even in the kolkhoz itself. The Government was anxious to present the Soviet Union in a democratic role within the League of Nations and was seeking the support of the enlightened bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie in other countries. The revolver shot fired by Nikolayev ushered in an era of panic and savagery. The immediate response was the execution of 114 people; then the execution of Nikolayev and his friends, fourteen young folk in all; then the arrest and imprisonment of the whole of the former Zinoviev and Kamenev tendency, close on three thousand persons as far as I could make out; then the mass deportation of tens of thousands of Leningrad citizens, simultaneously with hundreds of arrests among those already deported and the opening of fresh secret trials in the prisons themselves.

Certain mysterious happenings at the top of the Party have come to light: for example, the Yenukidze case. Aveli Yenukidze, whom I have mentioned a number of times in these reminiscences, was a Cau-

casian Old Bolshevik, a companion of Stalin's youth and, like Stalin, a Georgian; he had also been Secretary of the Central Soviet Executive since the foundation of the Soviet Union. In the discharge of these high offices he proved himself considerate, and as liberal and large-hearted as was possible in that age. His honesty was evidently an obstacle to the great settling of political accounts whose preparation was at hand. Relieved of his duties and shifted to a subordinate position, Yenukidze gradually disappeared from view (eventually to be shot in 1937, without "confession" or trial).

On Nikolayev's crime, the world has seen the publication of a number of successive versions, all of them extravagantly improbable, but not the original papers, whether the terrorist's own statements or the documents of the investigation. It was almost certainly an individual act committed by an infuriated young Communist. The Left or Trotskyist Opposition was, in all likelihood, represented in Leningrad at that time solely by Alexandra Bronstein; I have no doubt, with my intimate knowledge of its members, ideas, and general condition, that it had nothing whatsoever to do with the assassination. We still viewed ourselves as the partisans of "Soviet reform," and reform excluded any recourse to violence. I was too well acquainted with the followers of the Zinoviev tendency, as well as those of the Right Opposition, men tragically cautious and loyal, to suspect them for a single moment. The murder was a spontaneous act, but it confronted the Politburo with a frightful problem: not only their own responsibility for the years of darkness, but also the existence of a "shadow government" in the persecuted Opposition who, for all the abuse directed so incessantly against them, were more popular among the informed sections of the population than the leaders of the State. "Just think of it," one official said to me, terrified, "one of the Party leaders has been deliberately shot by a young Party member who didn't even belong to any Oppositional tendency!"

Throughout the whole of the year 1935, the Politburo was secretly torn between contrary inclinations, towards normalization on the one hand, towards terror on the other. The first-named tendency seemed to be on the winning side. Executions, jailings, and deportations had long ceased to interest the masses. By contrast, the abolition

of bread rationing made everybody happy. This country, for the sake of a little progress in the direction of prosperity, would walk over any number of corpses without noticing. I told myself that Stalin only had to increase real wages a little, allow the collective farmers room to breathe, shut down the concentration camps, and shout pardon to any political opponents who were either mere invalids or else interested only in supporting him without loss of face—and he could at once soar into imperishable popularity. I was of the opinion that he was about to embark on this course with the new Soviet Constitution, which Bukharin was busy drafting.

And so, for what was left of our family of deportees, the year glided past with a deceptive tranquillity. A number of Communist exiles arrived, who all continued to declare their loyalty to "the General Line"; we avoided their company except for a few of them.

I was finishing my books in a state of uncertainty. What would their destiny be, and mine? There was an autobiographical piece on the French anarchist movement just before the First World War (*Les Hommes perdus*), and a novel, *La Tourmente*, which followed on from my published novels. In it I reconstructed the atmosphere of the year 1920, the zenith of the Revolution. I had also completed a small collection of poems, *Résistance*, and amassed a great pile of notes for a historical work on War Communism. I finished these writings in two and a half years; they were the only works I have ever had the opportunity to revise at leisure. I wrote in French, in a town where no one understood French, unable to converse in this language myself except with my son. Although I am inured to efforts of willpower, I have to recognize that it was often only an actual hardening of my nature that enabled me to persevere. It is not easy to work without respite, wondering if all one's writing may not tomorrow be seized, confiscated, or destroyed. By one of those strokes of irony that are so frequent in Russia, the Soviet press was, quite appropriately, commemorating an anniversary of the Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko, who in 1847 had been exiled for ten years to the steppes of Orenburg, "forbidden to draw or to write." He did, all the same, write some clandestine poetry that he concealed in his boots. In this report I had an overwhelming insight into the persistence in our Russian land, after a century of

reform, progress, and revolution, of the same willful determination to wipe out the rebellious intelligence without mercy. Never mind, I told myself, I must hold on: hold on and work on, even under this slab of lead.

I made several copies of my manuscripts, and made an arrangement through the post with Romain Rolland to send him my books; he was perfectly willing to forward them to some publishers in Paris. Rolland had no love for me, since long ago I had strongly attacked his doctrine of nonviolence, which had its inspiration in Gandhi-ism, but he was worried by the repression in the USSR and wrote to me in very friendly terms. I posted him a first manuscript in four registered envelopes, not forgetting to inform the GPU that I had done so. All four envelopes were lost. I went to complain to the head of the secret police and he exclaimed, "Just see how deplorably the Post Office works! And then you say we're exaggerating when we uncover sabotage! Why, my own letters to my wife go astray! I promise you that a proper inquiry will be made and that the Post Office will pay you the lawful compensation without delay!"

He even offered, very kindly, to supervise the transmission, still to Romain Rolland, of another set of manuscripts that the GPU would see were visaed by the literary censors. I entrusted them to his care—and of course they never reached their destination.

While this was going on, my correspondence abroad was cut off. The head of the secret police shook his head gravely: "Oh dear! What would you have us do to put the Post Office right?" The Post Office regularly paid me hundreds of rubles for the registered letters that I continued to send at the rate of five a month and which "went astray." This afforded me the income of a well-paid technician.

Meanwhile, in France, the "Victor Serge affair" was proving a troublesome business in working-class and intellectual circles. In its annual conferences the United Teachers' Federation was demanding my release, or else some justification for my confinement. At the 1934 conference of this body the Soviet teachers' delegation had promised that I would be tried before a duly constituted court. At the Rheims conference in 1935, the Russian delegation, which was greeted with chants of "*Victor Serge! Victor Serge!*" raised by the whole hall, provoked a

storm of booing by declaring that I was mixed up in the Kirov affair! The League for the Rights of Man published the detailed documentation assembled by Magdeleine Paz. *La Révolution Prolétarienne*, *L'École Emancipée*, *Le Combat Marxiste*, and *Les Humbles* (under Maurice Wullens*) took up the campaign. Georges Duhamel, Léon Werth, Charles Vildrac, Marcel Martinet, Jacques Mesnil, Maurice Parijanine,* Boris Souvarine, and the wavering editorial board of *L'Europe* took an interest in the case in their own ways. In Holland, Henriette Roland-Holst, in Switzerland Fritz Brupbacher,* in Belgium Charles Plisnier* lent their support to the protests. Brupbacher was told quite baldly by Helena Stassova, the secretary of International Class War Prisoners Aid in Moscow: "Serge will never get out."

In June 1935 an "International Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture" took place in Paris, formally upon the initiative of such left-wingers as Alain, Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Élie Faure, André Gide, André Malraux, and Victor Margueritte. The actual initiative came from certain Communist back rooms that specialized in organizing congresses of this kind; their objective was to arouse a pro-Stalinist movement among the French intelligentsia and buy over a number of famous consciences. My friends decided to attend the congress and demand to be heard. Some of them got themselves ejected by the stewards. Aragon and Ehrenburg manipulated the assembly in accordance with secret directives. Barbusse, Malraux, and Gide presided with some embarrassment. Heinrich Mann* and Gustav Regler* spoke of the persecuted intellectuals of Germany, Gaetano Salvemini* of those in Italy and of freedom of thought in general. Salvemini caused a scene by condemning "all the oppressions" and mentioning my name. Gide, amazed to find that fierce efforts were being made to hush up the dispute, insisted on the ventilation of the matter, and Malraux, who was chairing the session, finally allowed Magdeleine Paz to speak: she spoke harshly, in fighting terms. Charles Plisnier, the novelist and mystical poet, and a Communist militant not long ago, supported her. Henry Poulaille, the author of *Damnés de la terre*, a true son of the workers' suburbs who did not mince his words, demonstrated in the hall.

The delegation from the Soviet writers included two men with

whom I had been on friendly terms, the poets Boris Pasternak and Nikolai Tikhonov, and also a person in the innermost circle of Party confidence, whom I had met in Moscow, the official journalist Mikhail Koltsov, a man as remarkable for his talent as for his pliant docility. Besides these there were the successful playwright Kirshon and the hack agitator-novelist Ehrenburg. Pasternak, who is at once the Mallarmé and Apollinaire of Russian poetry, a truly great writer and a victim of semi-persecution besides, kept in the background. The other four fulfilled instructions and declared without a blink that they knew nothing of the writer Victor Serge—these, my good colleagues of the Soviet Writers' Union! All they knew of was a "Soviet citizen, a confessed counterrevolutionary, who had been a member of the conspiracy which had ended in the murder of Kirov." As he declaimed this from the platform, Koltsov did not suspect that in 1939 he himself would disappear, in complete obscurity, into the GPU prisons. Kirshon did not suspect that two years later, he would disappear himself, dubbed a "terrorist-Trotskyist"—he whose pen had never been anything other than strictly conformist. Ehrenburg forgot his flight from Russia, his banned novels, his accusation against Bolshevism of "crucifying Russia." Tikhonov forgot his hymns to Courage, in those splendid epic ballads of his that I had translated into French. Nobody there could foresee the grim tumbrils of the Moscow Trials, but they knew of the 127 executions of innocents; these had been publicly announced the day after Nikolayev's deed and, according to the Soviet press, were even stoutly approved by humanists such as Jean-Richard Bloch and Romain Rolland. The shameless statement that justified my captivity by a murder committed two years after my arrest sent a shiver down more than one spine. André Gide went to see the Soviet Ambassador, who could give him no enlightenment at all.

Almost at the same time Romain Rolland, who had been invited to Moscow and received by Stalin, spoke to him of the "Victor Serge affair." Yagoda, the head of the political police, was consulted, and could find nothing in his files (if he had found the least confession of complicity signed by myself, I should have been lost). Stalin promised that I would be authorized to leave the USSR, together with my family.

But where could I go? For a moment the battle for visas seemed

hopeless. The French Prime Minister Laval refused us the entry permit into France for which my friends pleaded. Approaches made in London were fruitless. Approaches made in Holland were fruitless. Copenhagen promised. Then Émile Vandervelde, now in the government of Belgium, arranged for us to be granted permission to reside there for three years. If these negotiations had dragged on a few weeks longer, I should never have left the country; I should have been no more than a dead man on bail.

I was almost completely ignorant of the struggles inspired by solidarity and by friendship. I was also unaware of the enormity of my peril and that of the wild accusations hurled against me abroad. What I did know was that political deportation *never* came to an end in cases of mandatory sentence. You just changed location. To get through all the "normal" stages of deportation without trouble would take about ten years, and so I was expecting to be sent elsewhere for a new term. I had done my time and the GPU functionaries told me nothing; but a comrade who had just finished her sentence had received another two years. Suddenly I was given three days to get ready to leave for Moscow, and thence for an "unknown destination" which the GPU Collegium would determine. When the Political Red Cross sent me forms to sign for a Belgian visa, I thought I understood. Above all, I believed, I had enough standing and support in France to ensure that they would not dare to prolong my confinement. My comrades Bobrov and Eltsin, and others who had just come from Isolators, such as Leonid Girchek and Yakov Belenky, thought that I had fallen victim to unfortunate illusions: "You'll have a rude awakening when you find yourself in a nice dark prison or some desert in Kazakhstan . . ."

"It is not to the GPU's advantage," I replied, "that I should be in a position to observe its machinery any further. They know quite well that I will never capitulate and that in the end I shall just have to be released, able to write about it all . . . I would be doomed only if Fascism won in France, and it failed in its coup of 6 February 1934." Old Eltsin, crippled with rheumatism, was living in an icy little room in a house without a WC. I asked him, "Should I start a campaign in the press abroad to get you out?" and he answered, "No. My place is here."

I took the precaution of giving away my household goods only on

condition that they be kept at my disposal for a month and sent on to me if, from the heart of some Siberia or other, I asked for them back. All I took with me was papers, useful books, and personal keepsakes. I went off with my son on a freezing day in April. The snow covered the plains and the cities. Chernykh, usually so sprightly with his vigorous manner and his wild, Russian plainsman's hair, was gloomy when he said good-bye to me. "Those of us who are still alive," he told me, "will be old, forgotten, and obsolete on the day that a new liberty is born in Russia. We shall be like that old revolutionary who came back to St. Petersburg after thirty years of exile during the March days in 1917, met nobody he knew in all the chaos, and died of neglect in a hotel room. They recognized him . . . after it was all over!"

My heart was utterly ravaged as I left; I was severing attachments of a unique quality. I should have liked to have those dear faces, that I would never see again, imprinted on my brain, and those landscapes of white countryside, and even the image of our vast Russian misery, lived out by this brave, gritty, patient people. If I could have believed in any reasonable chance that I should not ultimately have been obliterated in a voiceless struggle that was already sterile, I would have been content to remain there even if it were in some little Mongol fishing village inside the Arctic Circle. But we do not live for ourselves; we live to work and fight.

The white plains fled past endlessly in the windows of the train. Two seedy-looking policemen had taken their seats not far from us. At Kuibyshev the Volga was still frozen. Tartar Republic, busy little stations, young women with colored kerchiefs over their hair, peasant dwellings surrounded by birch trees and little wooden paddocks . . . In the station at Syzran a great clang of ironmongery made the passengers jump, and we saw an implausible goods train slewing to and fro over yielding, dancing rails. It was only a small, unimportant derailment: the ballast gone, the soil dissolved with the early thaw, and a false move. The railwaymen chuckled bitterly about it: "That's where Stakhanovism gets you, citizen! They still have to learn that the stock gets tired just like people!" In another spot the train slowed down in the middle of the steppe and I saw workmen with iron bars holding together the broken rails over which we were gingerly moving. Our

train had to alter its route—and arrived several hours late—because of a serious accident on the line.

Moscow. The bustle of the streets and memories, memories! The luxurious Metro with its granite paving, its walls in Ural stone, its exits, huge underground avenues—but without benches for travelers, and expensive. We know how to build subterranean palaces, but we forget that a working-class woman coming home from work would love to be able to sit down beneath all these rich-hued stones.

At the Political Red Cross, in overcrowded little offices on the Kuznetsky Bridge, a stone's throw from the tall, square tower of the GPU building, we saw Ekaterina Pavlovna Peshkova and her colleague Vinaver, a former Liberal lawyer. Ekaterina Pavlovna still bore the name of Gorky, whose wife she had been and whose devoted friend she still was. Having won Lenin's confidence she was allowed, during the Red Terror, to found a relief organization for political detainees, of whatever kind; it was tolerated, first by the Cheka, then by the GPU, with a mixture of respect, trust, and hostility. Peshkova was able to manage the amazing moral feat of retaining the trust simultaneously of victims and inquisitors! For year after year this sad, thin woman, with lovely gray eyes and a style of dress whose very artlessness was elegant, aided by a tiny band of untiring fellow workers, lavished intervention, intercession, and relief on behalf of all the victims of the various terrors that followed hotfoot upon one another. Nobody else in the whole world during this century, I am convinced, has known, and at such close quarters, so many disasters, deaths, atrocities, and tragedies, some inevitable, some senseless. Peshkova lived in a private hell, the repository of countless secrets, all of them deadly as the strongest poison. She was never too tired, never disheartened, however dark the times were—and for her, only for her, all the times of the Revolution were dark. Pledged to secrecy, she has remained unknown to the great world outside. I know of enough instances of her arduous labors to fill a whole chapter, but I shan't. Just one instance, out of a possible hundred. The Political Red Cross was dealing with the case of an officer interned in a labor camp in the Solovietsky Islands, on the White Sea. He was coming back, pardoned. His wife was expecting him and came to Peshkova for news. Just when he was to leave for

Moscow, free, the ex-officer was shot together with the all the others of his barrack room because one of their fellow prisoners had escaped... "Please inform the widow..."

Ekaterina Pavlovna informed me that my wife, my poor invalid, was waiting for me, along with Jeannine,* the baby that had been born to us while I was in hospital at Orenburg a little over a year ago. She informed me also that I would not see Anita Russakova, who had just been arrested and deported for five years to Viatka. I immediately understood why: now I should not be able to talk to Anita and resolve the mystery of her lying confessions. I was told that we had to leave for Warsaw that same evening. I asked Ekaterina Pavlovna to request a twenty-four-hour delay from the GPU so that I could obtain an exit permit for my manuscripts (which had obligingly been promised me for the following day) from the censorship, and for my baggage from the head customs office. When she came back, Peshkova told me, "Go this very evening, don't press for anything. The secret police officer just told me that you were not out of the country yet, and that he was sending Yagoda a fresh memorandum about you..." I demurred no longer. I was never to be given any of my manuscripts although their exit had been authorized by Glavlit, the literary censorship agency. Of our baggage we took away only a few small articles in our attaché cases. All the rest of it was ultimately seized, or rather stolen, by the GPU.

Francesco Ghezzi, gaunt and unbending, now a worker in a Moscow factory and the only syndicalist still at liberty in Russia, came with us to the train. Off we went, traveling third class, alone in our carriage, with a few rubles and ten dollars between four persons. In the smart and empty station at Negoreloye, ornamental uniforms surrounded us and searched us minutely: we were made to undress, and even the soles of my shoes were scrutinized with attention. The train entered the gray no-man's-land of the frontier. Behind us we were leaving the boundless gray fields of the collective farms; now we were crossing a sort of desert laid out for war. We had the feeling that we were the only travelers in this wilderness. Oh, our great Russia of agonies, how hard it is to tear ourselves away from you!

So ended my seventeen years' experience of victorious revolution.

9.
DEFEAT IN THE WEST
1936–1941

ONCE WE were over the Polish border we could see charming little houses, newspaper kiosks selling the journals of Paris, Berlin, London, and New York, decently clad railwaymen, relaxed faces. By the illuminations of evening, Warsaw was a picture of tall façades, garnished with tasteful arrays of blue electric light. All the clothes in the Marszalkowska seemed elegant, and the very bustle of the street seemed to have an air of nonchalance and prosperity. The shops, full of everything to dream of, were an even greater contrast, compared with our meager cooperatives. All these comparisons we found heartrending. We did not get out of the train when we were crossing Nazi Germany. I could only manage, from the prominence of a bridge, to glimpse a square that I had known not long ago, near the Silesia Station in Berlin. Germany showed no sign of change to the passing eye: efficiency and neatness everywhere, architecture designed for privacy or sheer size, elaborate garden plots. Some Jewish travelers whom I questioned told me that they could live, but only in fear. I had the impression that, since each of them was looking to his own fortune in a large country in which terror was nothing if not secret, they knew little of the dark side of the regime, and were afraid to speak even of this little, even with a Russian traveler. Still, they regarded the USSR as a privileged land.

In Brussels we found refuge in the small home of Nicholas Lazerevich,* a syndicalist militant of Russian origin who had lately been in jail at Suzdal, and then expelled from the Soviet Union. He lived off his unemployment benefit and went to the Town Hall for the meals provided at minimum cost to the unemployed. When he offered to give me a share of his dinner, which consisted of a rich soup,

stew, and potatoes, I exclaimed, "Back home, over there, this is a meal for a high Party official!" He had three rooms, and possessed a bicycle and a gramophone. This unemployed Belgian lived as comfortably as a well-paid technician in the USSR.

The day after our arrival, as soon as I got up, I went to explore this provincial scene. The freshly painted houses still had the look of old Flemish towns, with modern buildings carefully styled to maintain an individual flavor; the square paving-stones were newly washed. My son and I would stop in front of the shops, moved beyond words. The little windows overflowed with hams, chocolates, gingerbread, rice, and such improbable fruits as oranges, mandarins, and bananas! These riches were within reach, within reach of an unemployed man in a working-class area, without benefit of Socialism or a Plan! It was disconcerting. I had known of all this before, but the reality of it shocked me as if I was seeing it for the first time. It was enough to make one weep in humiliation and grief for our Russia of revolutions.

"Ah! If only Tatiana could see it! If Petka could just visit this sumptuous shop for just a minute, sweets and stationery for next to nothing, just for school kids. Ah! If only!" These young women, these schoolchildren, these people from whom we were wrenching ourselves with pain hour by hour, they would never have believed their eyes, what joy would have shone in their faces! "They would cry out," my son suggested bitterly, "here is true Socialism!" We remembered fondly a working woman who was over twenty and had never seen a bar of chocolate until we brought her one from the *Torgsin*, though she thought she remembered having tasted an orange . . . On May Day we saw these provincial streets full of workers out in their Sunday best with their families: young girls with red-ribboned hair, men with red badges in their buttonholes, all of them with well-fed faces, the women fat at thirty and the men fleshy at forty or so. They were off to a Socialist demonstration, and looked just like the bourgeoisie as pictured by the popular imagination in Russia under the influence of the cinema: peaceable, content with their lot. I suspected that these workers of the West now had no desire whatsoever to fight for Socialism, or for anything else for that matter.

The city center, with its commercial opulence, its illuminated

signs, its Bourse set solidly in the middle of town, was the cause of much astonishment to my son, then in his sixteenth year and a Soviet schoolboy; my answers to his questions seemed incredible, and only confused him the more.

"This big building then, with all these shops and waterfalls of fire on the roof—does it belong to one man, who can do just what he likes with it? Does this shop, with enough shoes for the whole of Orenburg, belong to just one owner?"

"Yes, son: his name is written there in lights. The gentleman probably owns a factory, a country house, several cars . . ."

"All for him?"

"Yes, you might say."

It all seemed mad to my Soviet adolescent. He went on:

"But what does he live for, this man? What is his aim in life?" "His aim," I replied, "is, broadly speaking, to make himself and his children rich . . ."

"But he's already rich! Why does he want to get any richer? In the first place it's unjust—and then too, living just to get rich is simply idiotic! Are they all like that, these shop owners ?"

"Yes, son, and if they heard you talking, they would think you were a madman—a rather dangerous madman . . ." I have not forgotten this conversation; it taught me more than it taught my son.

I went to Ixelles to see the streets of my childhood once more: nothing had changed there, nothing at all. In the Place Communale I discovered Timmerman's bakery again: there were the same superb rice tarts, powdered with sugar, so dear to my twelve-year-old self, in the very same shop window. The bookseller in whose shop I bought Redskin tales as a child had prospered. I had known him as an anarchist with a defiantly careless necktie, and now he was a Communist sympathizer, white-haired, wearing an artistic cravat, and fat, of course . . . All those blazing ideas, all those struggles, all the bloodshed, wars, revolutions, civil wars, all our imprisoned martyrs—and all the time in the West here nothing was changing, and the tasty rice tarts in the baker's window told of the drowsy permanence of things.

The slum districts inspired me with quite different reflections; they *had* changed. La Marolle, Rue Haute, Rue Blaes, and all the

wretched alleys nearby had become healthy, smart, prosperous streets. This paupers' town, once decked out in rags and saturated in filth, now breathed an air of well-being: wonderful pork butchers' shops, a fine brand-new hospital, the hovels replaced by working-class flats with flowers lining the balconies. It was the work of reformist Socialism, as splendid as in Vienna.

There I saw Vandervelde, whom we had called "social traitor": he was coming back from a demonstration, with several Socialist leaders by him, and a great, loving murmur ran along the street, a sort of whispered acclamation: "*Le Patron! Le Patron!*" I went to see him at his house. His seventy years had spread weight upon him; his voice was weak and he had to listen with a hearing aid, head bent and eyes set in concentration. His small pointed beard was still dark and his eyes still held the same animated, vaguely sad expression behind their lenses. Shaking his head to and fro, he asked me about Russian prisons, about Trotsky, whose "aggressive manner" he could not understand—and how could I explain it to him? He told me, "This contented Belgium that you see is a positive oasis in the midst of dangers, terrible dangers."

Another time, after the execution of the Sixteen in Moscow, I found him dreadfully depressed, still crushed under the incomprehensibility of it all. "I have read Kamenev's confession: raving madness... How can you explain it to me? I knew Kamenev: I can see him before me now, with his white hair, his noble head—I cannot believe that they have killed him after this outburst of stark lunacy..." How could I begin to explain such crimes to this old man who, on the threshold of the grave, incarnated half a century of Socialist humanism? I was dumbfounded, even more than when my son asked me his questions.

The friends who came from Paris to visit me said, "Don't write anything about Russia, perhaps you may be too bitter... We are just at the start of a tremendous movement of popular enthusiasm. Oh, if you could see Paris, the meetings, the demonstrations! Limitless hope is being born. We are allied with the Communist Party, which is winning over wonderful masses of people; for them Russia is still an untarnished star... Besides, no one would believe you..." Only Boris

Souvarine thought otherwise. "The truth!" he said. "Absolutely naked, as undiluted, as brutal as possible! We are witnessing an epidemic of highly dangerous stupidity!"

The strikes of May and June 1936 burst suddenly upon France and Belgium, with their new form of struggle, unplanned by anybody: the occupation of the factories. In Antwerp and in the Borinage the movement started spontaneously, as soon as the workers read the newspaper reports of the events in France. My Socialist friends, some of whom were trade union leaders, were surprised, enraptured, and embarrassed. Léon Blum came to power, announcing social reforms that only the other day nobody had dreamt of—paid holidays, nationalization of war industries. The employing class was actually seized with panic.

The Belgian Sûreté called me in and accused me, following several press reports, of "agitating among the Borinage miners." I had been "seen at Jumet"! Most fortunately, I had not gone out of Brussels, but spent practically every evening there in the company of influential Socialists. "The GPU has not forgotten me," I remarked, "you can be sure of that."

For years hence, denunciations were going to rain around me: sometimes public, launched by the Communist press, which in Belgium demanded my expulsion "in the name of respect for the right of asylum"; sometimes secret, passed on mysteriously to the police authorities of the West. The welcoming telegram sent to me by Trotsky from Oslo got lost—intercepted, no one knew how. A letter from Trotsky's son that mentioned the agent provocateur Sobolevicius (Sénine) never reached me. In the house where I lived, the first floor was rented by strangers who kept watch over my comings and goings with no pretense of concealment. When the Spanish Civil War broke out, a police superintendent called on me with a search warrant, looking even in my baby daughter's cradle for arms intended for the Republicans. "I know, of course," he apologized, "that we can't take it seriously, but you have been denounced."

Two days after I arrived, a gentleman who seemed over-tanned, overdressed, and over-affectionate approached me in a café: "Dear Victor Serge! How good it is to meet you!" I recognized Bastajić, of *La*

Fédération Balkanique; he said he was living in Geneva, and pressed me to fix a meeting with him. "Geneva?" I said to myself. "You are a secret agent, then," and did not keep the appointment. I learned later that he had been sent by the GPU; he helped to arrange the murder of Ignace Reiss.

All of my close relatives in Russia had now been arrested, including two young women and two young men, all of them apolitical. Of these, my brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, I never heard again. My eldest sister, an intellectual and equally apolitical, disappeared too. My mother-in-law was torn from her children and deported alone, God knows where... Later, in Paris, I met a student from the Institute of Slavonic Languages and Studies and we became friends. She went to spend her holidays in Poland with some tutors and other students. I was denounced for having sent her to Warsaw for I know not know what secret mission. Shortly afterwards, she was invited to Moscow where she spent a couple of weeks in talks with some people from the GPU who questioned her about André Gide and myself. When she returned, she told me, "They have a hold on me. Let's not see each other any more..."

In 1938 I was living in the outskirts of Paris. Leopold III visited the city, with an entourage of officials that included several Socialists who were friends of mine. Information was laid, and passed from one department to another at the last moment, accusing me of "preparing the assassination of the King of Belgium." A senior Paris police official told me, "You can guess where that comes from, they're plaguing you and laughing at me!" However, a card classifying me as "suspected of terrorism" was sent around every police force in Europe, and my dossier swelled, terrifying the officials at the Préfecture. I had no end of trouble as a result.

In the meantime, now that I had made my anguished protest against the first Moscow Trial, the Soviet Legation in Brussels withdrew our passports. Antonov, the First Secretary, informed me that we had been "deprived of Soviet nationality."

"My daughter Jeannine too, who is not yet eighteen months old?" I asked ironically.

"That is so." Antonov refused me any written certificate of this

fact. The Belgian Foreign Ministry received only a verbal confirmation from him, and that after much insisting.

The Communist Press now began a fantastic campaign of slander against me; it was led by a man with whom I had old ties of friendship and who personally, I was to learn, was shocked and sickened by the whole business. For a short while I was the most calumniated man in the world, for in accordance with some directive those scandalous sheets were translated into all languages. Agencies offered to send me all the cuttings at one franc twenty centimes a copy. The Communist cell organization in the press and the French reviews was admirably complete. The review *Europe*, to which I contributed, was more or less in hock to them. On the *Nouvelle Revue Française* they were on close terms with Malraux. The left-wing intellectuals' weekly *Vendredi* was backed by industrialists doing good business in Russia, and so was "on the line." I had to give up my well-paid work on Léon Blum's *Le Populaire*, because of pressures influencing the editorial staff. The publishing house of Rieder, which had put out my novels, no longer showed them in its window display, and deleted them from its catalogue. I found myself under a boycott that was practically total; it was impossible for me to live by writing. The only platform I had left was in the Liège Socialist daily, *La Wallonie*, and in extreme left-wing publications with a limited circulation.

Fédération des Journalistes de Wallonie
CARTE DE LÉGITIMATION
Rédacteur au journal
La Wallonie à Liège
LAISSEZ-PASSER
Le Gouverneur de la Province de Liège et le Bourgmestre de la ville de LIÈGE
Le Bourgmestre de la Ville de Liège,
Liège, le 1er août 1937
Serge's Belgian press card

I decided to resume one of the trades of my youth, and become a proofreader. This was no longer an easy matter since I could not find work in any printshops where there were Communists. Luckily, the trade union was outside their sphere of influence. I worked in the Croissant printing works. I loved its old-fashioned nineteenth-

century buildings, the noise of machines, the smell of ink and dust, and the neighborhood around—bistros, small hotels catering for the love life of workers and working girls, houses of old Paris, the little restaurant where Jaurès was murdered. Cyclists would drink a glass or two, waiting for the last edition. As the "run" ended, faces would relax, and trade jokes pass back and forth over the "stone." I corrected the proofs of reactionary sheets, and left-wing ones, too, to which I was denied access as a writer, such as *Messidor*, the CGT weekly, which was run nominally by Jouhaux but actually by men who went to Moscow for their instructions, if they did not take them from secret and semi-secret agents.

Bernard Grasset published my books: an essay on Russia (*Destiny of a Revolution*) and a novel (*Midnight in the Century*). Grasset was something of a reactionary, but with an open mind, and he had colleagues who, like himself, loved any book, provided it was good. One felt, with this writers' publisher, well away from the mass publishing industry, for with him a book retained its whole personality; the editors never asked the authors to alter a single line.

An expression took root in France to characterize the feeling of strength and confidence in the future generated by the Popular Front: "euphoria," it was called. Trotsky wrote to me from Norway that it was leading straight to disaster, and I disagreed, wrongly, for at that juncture he saw far and true. For a short while I moved among some of Léon Blum's friends: Blum's brilliance, integrity, deep nobility, and warm popularity gave him such extraordinary prestige that people in his circle were afraid that he might be murdered by the Right. "It would be better," I said, "if he were also a man of authority—much less of a great Parliamentarian and much more of a leader for militant masses." They assured me that he was. At this time he was refusing to avail himself of secret funds to manipulate the press and back his own party. I observed, from rather close quarters, an instructive piece of negotiation between the head of his Press Office and a large daily newspaper influenced by Mussolini, which only demanded money—which it eventually got—to turn its support to the Popular Front. I wondered if the customary use of secret funds would not have saved Salengro, Socialist Minister of the Interior, who was driven to suicide

by the slander of the reactionary press. (He wasn't much of a tough nut, either!) At his funeral, the large daily I alluded to had been "oiled" and gave a lyrical account of the funeral... The right-wing plot was flowering in the open, the Communists were manipulating the Socialist Party at home and abroad, promising Blum "unconditional support" and fomenting discontent against him. Neither Blum nor old Bracke, amazingly energetic for his seventy years, with his Nietzschean profile and his aggressive spectacles, could see that the doctrine of Socialist unity is no more than a travesty when dealing with a totalitarian workers' party that is directed and financed from abroad by an absolutist government. On several occasions it looked like this duplicitous unity was going to be realized, opening the way to crimes and to risky adventures.

I did not share the opinion voiced by several extreme left-wingers who thought that in June 1936 the opportunity for revolution had been lost through a failure of nerve. I regarded the successful strikes as marking the re-emergence of the French working class which, enfeebled by the bloodshed of war, was now managing to recover its strength. It still needed several more years, in my opinion, to reach a fresh maturity, which would come with the passing of twenty or more years after the days of slaughter. For the same reason, I had immense confidence in the working-class movement of Spain; not having been involved in the war, the Spanish populace lived in the sure knowledge of its own brimming energy.

In any case, the "euphoria" was snapped quite suddenly by two events that had a historical connection. 18 July 1936 saw the outbreak of the Spanish military uprising, the coming of which was incisively predicted from the tribunal of the Cortes by my comrade Joaquín Maurín. Meanwhile, over the whole of the Soviet Union, arrests were being made—and were publicly reported—of well-known Communist officials. Trotsky sent me a scandalous cutting from *Pravda* proclaiming that "the monsters, enemies of the people, will be annihilated with a mighty hand." The Old Man wrote to me: "I fear that this may be the prelude to a massacre..." For long months, perhaps for years, he had had no firsthand news from Russia, and what I told him shocked him. I began to tremble for all those left behind there. And

on 14 August, like a thunderbolt, came the announcement of the Trial of the Sixteen, concluded on the 25th—eleven days later!—by the execution of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Ivan Smirnov, and all their fellow defendants. I understood, and wrote at once, that this marked the beginning of the extermination of all the old revolutionary generation. It was impossible to murder only some, and allow the others to live, their brothers, impotent witnesses maybe, but witnesses who understood what was going on. "Why this massacre?" I speculated, in *La Revolution Prolétarienne*, and could find no other explanation except the urge to wipe out alternative leadership teams on the eve of a war now considered as imminent. Stalin, I was convinced, had not specifically planned the trials, but in the Spanish Civil War he saw the beginning of the war in Europe.

I am conscious of being the living proof of the *unplanned* character of the first trial and, at the same time, of the crazy falsity of the charges brought up in all the Trials. I had departed from the USSR in mid-April, at a time when practically all the accused were already in prison. I had worked with Zinoviev and Trotsky, I was a close acquaintance of dozens of those who were to disappear and be shot, I had been one of the leaders of the Left Opposition in Leningrad and one of its spokesmen abroad, and I had never capitulated. Would I have been allowed to leave Russia, with my skill as a writer and my firm evidence as a witness whose facts were irrefutable, if the extermination trials had been in the offing? Then too, not one mad accusation had been made against me in the whole course of the Trials, which proved that lies were being spread only about those with no means of defending themselves. The case of Trotsky is different: his was the head that stood out most, and had to be struck down at all costs.

In Paris we set up a "Committee for Inquiry into the Moscow Trials and the Defense of Free Speech in the Revolution," which included the surrealist poet André Breton, the pacifist Félicien Challaye, the poet Marcel Martinet, Socialists like Magdeleine Paz and André Philip, writers like Henry Poulaille and Jean Galtier-Boissière, worker-militants like Pierre Monatte and Alfred Rosmer, Left journalists such as Georges Pioch, Maurice Wullens and Emery, and the historians Georges Michon and Dommanget. I got the Committee's

long title accepted through my insistence, ever since the summer of 1936, that we would also have the task of defending, within the Spanish Revolution, those whom Soviet totalitarianism would attempt to liquidate in Madrid and Barcelona by the same methods of lying and murder. We used to meet in café back rooms, first in the Place de la République, then in the Odéon. We had no money at all, and the Popular Front's press was closed to us. *Le Populaire* reduced its reports on the Trials to a minimum and never published our documents. For years there would be this struggle of no more than a handful of individual consciences against a total suppression of the truth, in the face of crimes that were beheading the Soviet Union and would soon bring about the downfall of the Spanish Republic. Often we felt like voices crying in the wilderness. We were heartened by the formation in the United States of the Commission of John Dewey, Suzanne LaFollette, and Otto Rühle to conduct the same inquiry. (And even now, as I write these lines, I learn of the mysterious murder in New York of one of the great idealists who worked with that Commission, the old Italian anarchist Carlo Tresca . . .)

The most shameless lying conceivable blazed out before our very eyes. But as witnesses we were practically gagged. In *Pravda* I could read the accounts (all of them mangled) of the Trials. I picked out literally hundreds of improbabilities, absurdities, gross distortions of fact, utterly lunatic statements. But it was a deluge of delirium. Scarcely had I analyzed one billow of flagrant deceit when another, more violent, would wash away my day's work into futility. The torrent was so overwhelming that one could never find one's bearings. The British Intelligence Service blended with the Gestapo; railway accidents became political crimes; Japan entered the act; the Great Famine of collectivization had been organized by "Trotskyists" (all of them in jail at the time); crowds of defendants whose trials were pending disappeared forevermore into the shadows; the succession of executions went on into the thousands, without trials of any sort. And in every country of the civilized world, learned and "progressive" jurists were to be found who thought these proceedings to be correct and convincing. It was turning into a tragic lapse of the whole modern conscience. In France the League for the Rights of Man, with a repu-

tation going back to Dreyfus, had a jurist of this variety in its midst. The League's executive was divided into a majority that opposed any investigation, and an outraged minority that eventually resigned. The argument generally put forward amounted to: "Russia is our ally..." It was imbecilic reasoning—there is more than a hint of suicide about an international alliance that turns into moral and political servility—but it worked powerfully. The Chairman of the League for the Rights of Man, Victor Basch, one of the brave souls of the old battles against the army's General Staff (of the Dreyfus affair), gave me an interview lasting several hours; at the end of it, crushed with melancholy, he promised me that a commission would be called. It never was.

With no resources, with no assistance, I published irrefutable analyses of the three great fraudulent Trials. Events have validated every line of them, even down to certain "finer points." I announced that Radek, condemned to ten years' imprisonment, would not live for long: he was murdered in prison. I would need a hundred pages to go over this question again; all I can do is sketch out the bare essentials. Having known the men and Russia, I must repeat that the Old Bolsheviks were imbued with Party fanaticism and Soviet patriotism to such a degree that it made them able to undergo the worst tortures without a possibility of betraying. Their very confessions attested to their innocence. The totalitarian State rested on such a perfect system of surveillance and interior espionage that all conspiracy was impossible. But the entirety of the Old Party loathed the regime and the Chief lived in the expectation of catastrophes—which did not fail to come—and this resulted in lots of private conversations and in a climate of opposition to the Chief, in spite of the acts of submission and adoration the Chief tirelessly imposed. In any case, the vast majority of the Bolsheviks allowed themselves to be shot at night, refusing to play the sordid game of confessions of political complicity. A few walked to their deaths while mutilating their own conscience so as to go on serving their party. With one or two exceptions, all those who declared themselves to be "Trotskyists" were not, had never been, and were even fundamentally in disagreement with Trotsky, having conducted polemics against him for years. If there were conspiratorial plots here and there, they were hatched by the GPU itself, which had

resorted to this stratagem of provocations in order to liquidate the last Whites (monarchists), to liquidate the Mensheviks in the Caucasus, and finally to liquidate, as I have related, our own opposition's structures. If diplomats, engineers, military men, journalists, or secret agents had contacts abroad—contacts which were subsequently turned into crimes—they were always following directives and under supervision at every step. I personally know of several such instances. A grotesque logic ruled over this bloodbath. On the eve of war, the men in power sought to suppress any possible alternative leaders as well as to chastise sacrificial goats and deflect responsibility for the famine, the chaos of the transport system, the poverty which they, themselves, were responsible for. Once the first Bolsheviks were assassinated, the rest had to be assassinated, too, since they were witnesses who would never forgive. After the first trials, those who had organized them and knew their underside also had to be eliminated, in order that the counterfeit myth become credible.

The mechanism of extermination was so simple that one could forecast its workings. Months in advance, I foretold the end of Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Smilga, Rakovsky, and Bubnov. Antonov-Ovseyenko, the revolutionary who had led the attack on the Winter Palace in 1917, the wretch who had just had my friend Andrés Nin and the anarchist philosopher Camillo Berneri murdered in Barcelona, was recalled from his post in Spain to take up that of People's Commissar of Justice, now lying vacant through the disappearance of Krylenko into the shadows; I foretold that he was doomed—and so he was. Yagoda, head of the GPU, organizer of the Zinoviev trial, was appointed People's Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs; I foretold that he was doomed—and so he was. One's foresight was absolutely useless. The dreadful machine carried on its grinding, intellectuals and politicians snubbed us, public opinion on the Left was dumb and blind. From the depth of a meeting hall, a Communist worker shouted at me: "Traitor! Fascist! Nothing you can do will stop the Soviet Union from remaining the fatherland of the oppressed!" I spoke wherever I could, in Socialist branches, trade union meetings, at the League for the Rights of Man, in Masonic lodges, at receptions held by the *Esprit* group. I could carry a meeting quite easily; contradiction

I encountered never, insults and threats rather often. Officials of the Paris police advised me to change my lodgings and take precautions (I had no money and so could not).

Everywhere, well-intentioned men, troubled to the depth of their souls, would ask me: "But give us an explanation of the mystery of the confessions." And when I gave them the threefold Russian explanation, through the selection of defendants, their devotion to the Party, and the Terror, they would shake their heads, and appeal to "the conscience of the individual which..." They were unable to understand that revolutions and totalitarian systems create quite a different sort of individual conscience, and that we are in an age in which the human conscience is being turned inside out. Sometimes, angry in my own turn, I would shout at them: "You then, you give me an explanation of the conscience shown by the famous intellectuals and Western party leaders who swallow it all—the killing, the nonsense, the cult of the Leader, the democratic Constitution whose authors are promptly shot!" Romain Rolland had not long ago undertaken, at my request, to intervene if there was any threat of a death sentence. I wrote to him, "Today in Moscow a trial is opening... No more blood, no more blood upon this poor butchered Revolution! You alone have the moral authority in the Soviet Union which means that you may—which means that you must—intervene..." Romain Rolland kept his mouth shut and thirteen executions followed.

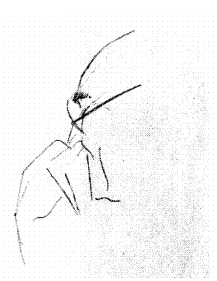
Georges Duhamel told me, "I understand this drama. I have been enlightened by a personal experience whose nature I cannot disclose. But I feel that I can do nothing, nothing..." There he was, living in his tranquil study over the Rue de Liège, surrounded by his tall sons (all eligible for the next war), and closeted with his vision of a dying civilization. "I am a bourgeois, Serge, this world is dear to me because, whatever you may say, it has achieved so much for man, and now it looks as if it is all going to go under..."

Henri Sellier, the Socialist Minister of Health, noted for his efforts in working-class housing, explained to me that the interests of the Popular Front demanded the humoring of the Communists. Around the review *Esprit* I met left-wing Catholics like Jacques Lefranc and Emmanuel Mounier, genuine Christians of fine, honest intellect.

They sensed sharply that they were living at the end of an era; they loathed all lying, especially if it formed an excuse for murder, and they said so outright. In their simple teaching of "reverence for the human person," I felt immediately at one with them. And what teaching could be more wholesome in an age in which civilization itself is cracking like rocks in a volcanic eruption?

On the eve of his journey to Russia I had addressed an open letter to André Gide. In it I said: "We are building a common front against Fascism. How can we block its path, with so many concentration camps behind us? Let me say this to you: one can only serve the working class and the USSR by seeing absolutely clearly. And let me ask this of you in the name of those over there who have every kind of courage: have the courage to see clearly."

We met several times in Brussels and Paris. Though well past sixty, he was still surprisingly young in manner and mind. His hairless face, with its tall, bare spread of brow, was austere, as if its contours had been shaped by an unresting inner effort. The immediate impression he gave was of extreme timidity that was, however, mastered by a scrupulous moral courage. I saw him weighing every word of his notes on the Soviet Union. He was full of hesitations, but only as far as it concerned the act of publishing; his spirit knew no hesitation, but pronounced sentence, not without hope even then. His manuscript, entrusted to the printer with instructions for strict secrecy, had nevertheless been read by Ehrenburg: "These people have their ways and means . . ." Militiamen on the Madrid front (and how did they know of it?) sent a telegram to Gide begging him not to publish a book that could prove "a mortal blow" for them. Gide hated all intrigue, but the militiamen of Madrid were infinitely close to his heart. His words had a tone of almost absolute gloom:



Gide by Vlady, Paris, 1938

"I thought I would be able to do so much in Moscow, for so many victims . . . I saw at once that one could do absolutely nothing. They overwhelmed me with banquets—as if I went there to feast! Twice

Bukharin tried to get near me, and was stopped. All the same, I do not want there to be the slightest touch of pessimism in my book . . . What a flood of abuse I'm going to face! And there will be militiamen in Spain who will believe that I am actually a traitor!" Underlying all his words was the anguish of wondering: "What use can I be now?"

What I was expecting duly happened. In March 1937 (the date has a certain importance), while paying a visit to a friend's house in Brussels, I met a young woman whose eyes were wide with terror. "I am afraid," she said, "to believe what I've just heard. A prominent Communist from Spain has been to see my husband. I heard him say that in Barcelona they're getting ready to liquidate thousands of anarchists and POUM militants, and that it's going along very nicely . . ."

At once I warned the comrades of POUM. The Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista, a minority party of dauntless revolutionaries, had a division of volunteers at the front and a membership of forty thousand or so. Its leaders, Maurín (now lost in Franco territory), Juan Andrade,* Andrés Nin, Julián Gorkín, Gironella,* Jordi Arquer,* and Rovira, all had some background in the various Communist Oppositions, and had pronounced their judgment, in terms no less clear for being temperate, upon the Moscow Trials. They had serious disagreements with Trotsky, but viewed him with comradely admiration. They published my articles and my pamphlet *Seize Fusillés*. They had a first-rate understanding of the methods of the Comintern, and maintained an uncompromising defense of working-class democracy. Unless it crushed them the Communist Party would be unable to press its concealed authority upon the Spanish Republic.

Julián Gorkín passed through Brussels, and we both went to see the leaders of the Socialist International, Fritz Adler and Oscar Pollak.* Adler had lately published a moving and intelligent pamphlet on the "Witchcraft Trial" in Moscow. He was the image of despair. Pollak answered us, "What do you want us to do? Since the Russians are sending arms to Spain, they control the situation!"

From day to day during April, I observed from Paris the preparation of Barcelona's bloody days of May. I scattered my futile warnings in the left-wing Socialist press, as far as the United States itself. Forces with superior weapons, which could have captured Saragossa, stayed

back in Barcelona, for reasons that were obscure—and Catalonia was not sent the arms that Russia had promised. If Franco had begun his attack on that region in the spring of 1937, he would probably have taken it. The Communist provocation came duly at the appointed time, on 4 May. There was a battle in the streets, and rather than begin a civil war behind the lines, the CNT (Confederación Nacionale del Trabajo) submitted. A few days went by, and then the POUM was outlawed. Its leaders were arrested and taken to a secret destination, not by the regular Republican police but by the police force of the Communist Party. I knew that once Andrés Nin fell into Russian hands he would never come out alive: he knew Moscow too well. Fearless, optimistic, and physically weakened by illness, he did not go into hiding. Our Committee in Paris lost no time in sending Magdeleine Paz, Félicien Challaye, and Georges Pioch on a deputation to the Spanish Embassy. There they had an icy reception. An Embassy Secretary gave them guarantees of justice for all the prisoners, but added with a little gesture of despair, "As for Nin . . ."

"What do you mean, as for Nin?"

"Nothing, nothing. I know nothing, I can tell you nothing."

The great flyer Edouard Serre, the head of Air France and a sincere Socialist with a record of solid service to the Republic and Russia, went to see Suritz,* the Soviet Ambassador in Paris. He begged Suritz to save Nin, whose death would lead to repercussions infinitely damaging to the cause of Spain. "Thank you for coming to see me," the Ambassador said. "Draw up a short memorandum on the matter without delay, and I will forward it." Serre told us of his visit later.

The delegations we had dispatched to Spain managed, after great efforts, to retrace Nin's tracks up to a frontier of darkness where the trail disappeared. Incarcerated in an isolated villa at Alcalá de Henares, just outside Madrid, close to an airfield occupied by Soviet planes, Nin was then kidnapped by uniformed men, and disappeared forever into the shadows. A Socialist official in the Madrid political police and an examining magistrate opened an investigation, which at once implicated certain leading Communist officials. The police official, Gabriel Moron, had to resign and the magistrate eventually fled. Largo Caballero, the head of the Government, resigned too, and was

replaced in office by Negrín. We learnt that old Caballero had refused to outlaw the POUM, since it was a working-class party, and that the installation of a more docile government had come about through Communist pressure. All we could cry now was: "The Spanish Republic is doomed!" For indeed it was impossible to defeat Fascism while creating within the Republic a system of concentration camps and murder directed against the most forceful and reliable anti-Fascists; those methods destroyed the moral standing of democracy.

The Russian Socialist engineer Marc Rhein, the son of the Menshevik leader Abramovich, had gone before Nin into the same obscure graveyard. Kurt Landau, the Austrian Socialist, followed. Erwin Wolf, a student of Czech-German nationality and bourgeois origins, had been Trotsky's secretary in Norway. He came to see me in Brussels and told me that he could not live in peace, studying Marxism, while a revolution was struggling for its life. He was off to Spain. I told him: "You are going to certain murder." However, he had all the pugnacious confidence of youth. Tall forehead, fine features, the rigidity of the young theoretician, a mind that was single-track, schematic, and keen. He had just married a Norwegian girl, the daughter of the Socialist Knudsen: he was happy and sure of himself. Once in Barcelona, he was of course arrested. The Czechoslovak and Norwegian consulates applied their influence and he was released. A few days later he was kidnapped in the street and disappeared, this time forever.

Each one of these crimes was enveloped in the thick, suffocating clouds wafted by the Communist press. The POUM, the victims of kidnapping, assassination, or (as in Mena's case) the firing squad, the revolutionaries in jail, all were unendingly denounced as "Trotskyists, spies, agents of Franco-Hitler-Mussolini, enemies of the people" in the undiluted style of the Moscow Trials. This uninterrupted avalanche of delirious outpourings in the papers, the radio, at meetings, even in books, were on precisely the same level of psychological appeal as the Nazi agitation against the "Judeo-Masonic plutocracy, Marxism, Bolshevism," and, occasionally, "the Jesuits"! We are witnessing the birth of collective psychoses similar to those of the Middle Ages, and the creation of a technique for stifling critical thought, so laboriously acquired by the modern mind. Somewhere in *Mein Kampf* there

are twenty exquisitely cynical lines on the usefulness of slander accompanied by violence. The new totalitarian methods for dominating the mind of the masses incorporate the devices of mainstream commercial advertising, amplified by violence and frenzied irrationality. The defiance of reason humiliates it and foreshadows its defeat.

The enormity and wildness of such accusations take the average person by surprise since he cannot imagine that he can be lied to on such a scale. The outrageous language intimidates him and in a way redeems the imposture: reeling under the shock, he is tempted to tell himself that there must, after all, be some justification for this madness, some justification of a higher order surpassing his own understanding. Success is possible for these techniques, it seems clear, only in epochs of confusion, and only if the brave minorities who embody the critical spirit are effectively gagged or reduced to impotence through reasons of State and their own lack of material resources.

In any case, it was not a matter of persuasion: it was, fundamentally, a matter of murder. One of the intentions behind the campaign of drivel initiated in the Moscow Trials was to make any discussion between official and Oppositional Communists quite impossible. Totalitarianism has no more dangerous an enemy than the spirit of criticism, which it bends every effort to exterminate. Any reasonable objection is bundled away with shouts, and the objector himself, if he persists, is bundled off on a stretcher to the mortuary. I have met my assailants face-to-face in public meetings, offering to answer any question they raised. Instead they always strove to drown my voice in storms of insults, delivered at the tops of their voices. My books, rigorously documented, and written with the sole, passionate aim of uncovering the truth, have been translated for publication in Poland, Britain, the United States, Argentina, Chile, and Spain. In none of these places has a single line ever been contested, or a single argument adduced in reply—only abuse, denunciation, and threats. Both in Paris and in Mexico there were moments when in certain cafés people discussed my forthcoming assassination quite as a matter of course.

Perhaps, for the sake of the reader ignorant of those past dramas, I must press home one example. Andrés Nin had spent his youth in Russia, first as a loyal Communist, then as a militant of the Left Op-

position. When he returned to Spain he had undergone imprisonment by the reactionary Republic, translated Dostoevsky and Pilnyak, attacked the incipient Fascist tendencies, and helped to found a revolutionary Marxist party. The Revolution of July 1936 had elevated him to the Ministry of Justice in the Generalitat of Catalonia. In this capacity he had established popular tribunals, ended the terrorism of irresponsible elements, and instituted a new marriage code. He was a scholarly Socialist and a first-rate brain, highly regarded by all who knew him and on close terms of friendship with Companys, the head of the Catalan Government. Without the slightest shame the Communists denounced him as "an agent of Franco-Hitler-Mussolini," and refused to sign the "pact against slander" proposed to them by all the other parties; they walked out of a meeting at which the other parties asked them, all calmly, for proofs; in their own press they appealed continually to the evidence of the Moscow Trials, in which, however, Nin's name had never once been mentioned. All the same, Nin's popularity increased, and deservedly; nothing else remained but to kill him.

We succeeded in opening an international campaign in defense of the persecuted Socialists of Spain. In Britain the Independent Labour Party, including Fenner Brockway, Maxton, McGovern, and MacNair, and in Holland Sneevliet's Revolutionary Socialist Party gave us their tireless support. In France the revolutionary Left in the Socialist Party was very active; this included Marceau Pivert,* Collinet,* Edouard Serre, and Paul Schmierer.* Only in the minority parties of the left and among isolated individuals did conscience still burn. "Political realism," which was often no more than blind and base politics, paralyzed large organizations. The editor of *Le Populaire* and historian of Fascism, Rossi exclaimed to me, "The conscience of the masses—my friend, it doesn't exist! The dirty tricks of a man like Marcel Cachin add up to nothing—he can supply funds to Mussolini in 1915, slander Lenin in 1917, worship Lenin in 1920, lament perpetually in private over Moscow's methods, applaud all the shootings over there at the top of his voice, call Léon Blum a Social-Fascist yesterday and pledge his friendship to him today—and the Red suburbs idolize him! We, with our outmoded idealism, are completely blocked!" All

this was in order to explain to me how very difficult it would be to insert, in a Socialist newspaper, a short note on the trial of the POUM.

Maxton of the ILP and Sneevliet of the Dutch RSP were at the head of our deputations to Spain. We briefed our delegates carefully: "Trust nobody at their word. If someone points a man out to you in a prison yard and says that it is Nin, insist on speaking to him and touching him! If they tell you that Gorkín's prison is a sanatorium, insist on going there—that same day! If they bring you a whole cartload of 'evidence,' insist on an expert opinion for a single page of it—and immediately!" They harassed Republican Ministers with their questions and protests, and proceeded to knock on the doors of the Communist Party's secret prisons. Maxton the imperturbable, with his angular face and steady gray eyes, pipe in mouth, heard the Spanish ministers Irujo and Zugazagoitia—honest Republicans who did their utmost to save the victims—reply to him: "These abominable acts are done against our will. Do you think that we are safe ourselves? And please remember that it is the Russians who are giving us arms!" Twenty times, if once, we expected to hear it announced that the members of the POUM Executive had been executed summarily in some Communist jail. Our campaign saved their lives. Their trial, held at the hour when the Republic was already entering its death agony, was a real moral triumph.

Black was the spring of 1937. Hardly were the Barcelona troubles ended, and the murdered corpses buried or else mysteriously incinerated when, as I had been able easily to predict, the tragedies of Russia once more cast their peculiar stupor over the world. The incessant massacre of an entire revolutionary generation moved scarcely anybody. Reactionaries were, on the contrary, satisfied with the sight of a victorious revolution discrediting itself in the extermination of its best men. An Italian Fascist magazine wrote that Bolshevism itself was coming around to the formation of a Fascist style of State. The Socialist adversaries of Bolshevism, who were of course outraged, emphasized that it was all the irresistible march of History.

The annihilation of the Soviet General Staff—Marshal Tukhachevsky and his companions in ill fortune—did make a profound impression. "Just think of it," one French journalist said to me, "every

general in the whole world is shocked! Shooting marshals—it just isn't done!" It was, besides, realized that the decapitation of the Red Army High Command could, in the context of a Europe approaching war, have serious consequences. There was no mystery in the logic of these events: impossible to destroy the nucleus of the revolutionary regime without touching that of the army. The army was well aware of this, and perhaps its old leaders would have liked to turn the blow. On 11 June the leaders of the Red Army were executed in the shadows.

Scarcely had the Tukhachevsky case passed from the front pages when I read the report on the crime of Bagnoles-sur-Orne: two men stabbed to death in their car on a country road in Normandy. I immediately recognized the picture of one of them: a splendid comrade, the Italian anti-Fascist Carlo Rosselli,* editor of *Giustizia e Libertà*. We had met only recently. He was a genial, attentive man, well-built, with a full face, ruddy complexion, light brown hair, blue eyes. He would say to me quietly, "You know, I'm just a liberal at heart . . ." and we used to discuss the international implications of the war in Spain, of which he had a profound knowledge . . . Carlo Rosselli had just come from the trenches in Huesca. He was sure that this civil war was going to be the beginning of the war in Europe. He was brimming with hope and great projects. As in Matteotti's case, the order to kill had come from Mussolini himself. With him fell his brother, the historian Nello Rosselli, who had been allowed to leave Italy (to take a holiday!) so that he could be got rid of in this way. At that very time Mussolini was viewed by all right-thinking folk in Europe and America as "the enlightened dictator of Latin civilization." We felt that we were being knifed from two sides at once.

In Russia, writers were disappearing, notably one of the greatest, Boris Pilnyak; the PEN Clubs kept a discreet silence . . . The "judges" of Tukhachevsky (who had probably been executed without even a faked trial) disappeared too. Generals and leaders of war industry were followed to the grave by admirals and airplane designers. My unending task of unraveling these tragedies was a nightmare without respite.

September 1937 . . . I had formed a close acquaintance with Hendricus Sneevliet. In the previous year we had spoken on the same platform at evening meetings in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, for solidarity

with the Republicans of Spain. Our audiences had been working-class and wonderfully sensible. I was aware of the high caliber of his party. He now informed me that a leading official in the GPU's Secret Service, resident in Holland, had been heartbroken by the Zinoviev trial and crossed over to the Opposition: Ignace Reiss was warning us that we were all in peril, and asking to see us.

Sneevliet by Vlady

Reiss was at present hiding in Switzerland. We arranged to meet him in Rheims on 5 September 1937. We waited for him at the station buffet, then at the post office. He did not appear. Puzzled, we wandered through the town, admiring the cathedral, which was still shattered from the bombardment, drinking champagne in small cafés, and exchanging the confidences of men who have been saddened through a surfeit of bitter experiences. Both of Sneevliet's sons had committed suicide—the second out of despair because virtually nothing could be done to help the anti-Nazi refugees in Amsterdam, or prevent them from being turned back at the frontier. Several young men of his Party had just died in Spain. Of what use was their sacrifice? Long ago, Sneevliet had been deported to the Dutch East Indies, where he had founded a popular party[1]; the friends of his youth had been sentenced to penal servitude for life and the pleas he had since made on their behalf came to nothing. In his own country, the forces of Fascism were openly growing, although the bulk of the population was opposed to them. Sneevliet sensed the approach of the war in which Holland, its working class, and its developed culture would be inevitably smashed: doubtless only at the beginning, only to rise again later—but when, how? "Is it necessary for us to pass through bloodbaths and utter darkness? What can one do?"

All this had aged him a little, so that his face wore a persistent

1. This was the Indies Social-Democratic Union, founded by Sneevliet in 1913, which later became the Indonesian Communist Party.

frown amid its close lines, but he never lost heart. "It is strange," he remarked, "that Reiss hasn't come. He is such a punctual man..." As we took the train back to Paris we read in a newspaper that on the previous day the bullet-riddled body of a foreigner had been picked up on the road from Chamblandes, near Lausanne. In the man's pocket was a railway ticket for Rheims.

Three days later Elsa Reiss, the widow, told us in a broken voice of the trap that had been laid. A woman comrade named Gertrude Schildbach had arrived. She, like them, had wept in anguish at the news of the Moscow executions. She had known Reiss for fifteen years, and came now to ask his advice. They went out together; the comrade left chocolates for the wife and child. These were filled with poison. In the convulsed fingers of the murdered man a handful of gray hair was found... The Communist-influenced press in Switzerland wrote that a Gestapo agent had just been liquidated by his colleagues. Not a single newspaper in Paris would take our disclosures, detailed as they were.

I paid a visit to Gaston Bergery at the office of *La Flèche*. Bergery was running a left-wing movement called Le Frontisme, which was directed simultaneously against the monopolies and against Communism. He was an elegant, pugnacious character with open but subtle features, and with talents equally appropriate, it seemed, either for mass agitation or a Government position. He was also fond of rich living and quite evidently ambitious; we all knew that he could quite easily turn one day either to the Fascist Right or towards revolution. Within the Popular Front he maintained a position of independence. "We will publish!" he told me. The silence was broken. Our investigation laid the crime open to the light of day. Senior Russian officials, protected by diplomatic immunity, were asked to pack and be out within three days. The inquiry revealed that minute preparations for a kidnapping were being hatched around the person of Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son. An employee of the USSR trade mission, Lydia Grozovskaya, was indicted, freed on very substantial bail, closely followed, yet managed to disappear. Several times, the investigation seemed to falter. We informed the Minister of the Interior, Marx Dormoy, an old right-wing Socialist, hard and conscientious, who promised that the case would not be hushed up and kept his word.

A certain somebody, who was sure that he was about to be killed, telephoned, demanding to see us. Leon Sedov, Sneevliet, and myself met this person in the office of a Paris lawyer, Gérard Rosenthal. He was a little thin man with premature wrinkles and nervous eyes: Walter Krivitsky, whom I had met several times in Russia. Together with Reiss and Brunn (or Ilk) he had headed the Secret Service and was engaged in amassing arms for Spain. Against his wishes he had taken part in preparing the ambush for his friend; he was then ordered to "liquidate" Reiss's widow before returning to Moscow.

Conversation was painful at first. He told Sneevliet, "We have a spy in your party, but I do not know his name," and Sneevliet, honest old man that he was, burst out in anger: "You scoundrel!" He told me that our mutual friend Brunn had just been shot in Russia, like most of those who had been secret agents in the first period of the Revolution. He added that, despite all, he felt very distant from us and would remain loyal to the revolutionary State; the historic mission of this State was far more important than its crimes, and besides he himself did not believe that any opposition could succeed. One evening I had a long talk with him on a dark, deserted boulevard next to the sinister wall of the Santé prison. Krivitsky was afraid of lighted streets. Each time that he put his hand into his overcoat pocket to reach for a cigarette, I followed his movements very attentively and put my own hand in my pocket.

"I am risking assassination at any moment," he said with a feeble, piqued smile, "and you still don't trust me, do you?"

"That's right."

"And we would both agree to die for the same cause: isn't that so?"

"Perhaps," I said. "All the same it would be as well to define just what this cause is."

In February 1938 Leon Sedov, Trotsky's eldest son, died suddenly in obscure circumstances. Young, energetic, of a temperament at once gentle and resolute, he had lived a hellish life. From his father he inherited an eager intelligence, an absolute faith in revolution, and the utilitarian, intolerant political mentality of the Bolshevik generation that was now disappearing. More than once we had lingered until dawn in the streets of Montparnasse, laboring together to comb out

the mad tangle of the Moscow Trials, pausing from time to time under a street lamp for one or the other of us to exclaim aloud: "We are in a labyrinth of utter madness!" Overworked, penniless, anxious for his father, he passed his whole life in that labyrinth. In November 1936 a section of Trotsky's archives, which had been deposited in secret a few days previously at the Institute of Social History, 7 Rue Michelet, were stolen in the night by criminals who simply cut through a door with the aid of an acetylene torch. I helped Sedov in his pointless investigation; what could be more transparent than a burglary like this?

Later on he apologized for refusing to give me his address when he went away to the Mediterranean coast for a rest: "I am giving it only to our contact man—I really have to be wary of the least indiscretion . . ." And we discovered that down at Antibes two of Reiss's murderers had lived near to him; another was in lodgings actually next door to his own. He was surrounded at every turn, and suffered fevers of anxiety each night. He underwent an operation for appendicitis in a clinic run by certain dubious Russians, to which he had been taken under an assumed identity. There he died, perhaps as a result of culpable negligence; the inquest revealed no definite findings . . . We carried his coffin of white wood, draped with the red Soviet flag, to the Père Lachaise cemetery. He was the third of Trotsky's children that I had seen die, and his brother had just disappeared into Eastern Siberia.

At the cemetery, a tall, thin, pale young man came to shake my hand. His face was downcast, his gray eyes piercing and wary, his clothes shabby. I had known this young doctrinaire in Brussels and we did not get on together: Rudolf Klement, secretary of the Fourth International. In his efforts to infuse some life into this feeble organization he worked at a fanatical pitch, committing in due course gross political blunders that I had many a time rebuked. On 13 July of the same year (1938), I received an express message: "Rudolf kidnapped in Paris . . . In his room everything was in order, the meal ready on the table . . ." Forged letters from him—or genuine ones dictated at pistol-point—arrived from the Spanish border. Then, a headless body resembling Klement was fished out of the Seine at Meulan. The Popular Front press said nothing, of course. Friends of the missing man identified the decapitated corpse by the characteristic shape of the torso and

hands. The Communist daily papers *L'Humanité* and *Ce Soir* joined the argument, and a Spanish officer, actually a Russian who was afterwards nowhere to be found, declared that he had seen Klement at Perpignan on the day of his disappearance. The trail having now been confused, the case was closed.

Shortly after this, Krivitsky left for the United States, where he published his book *I Was Stalin's Agent*. In February 1941 he was found dead in a Washington hotel room, with a bullet in his head.

The confident and luxurious Paris of the Universal Exposition of 1937, its cosmopolitan crowds intoxicated with the insouciance of life, its Eiffel Tower ablaze with rockets of light, was fading into the past. The Paris of the great peaceful strikes and the marches of popular unity, the Paris of workers and petit bourgeois cheering a great lawyer, a great Jewish intellectual, a Socialist, a revolutionary, and a moderate, was all fading from memory... "How strong we felt! Remember?" The Paris of tense working-class suburbs, of left-wing salons, of humble committees where thousands of necessary tasks of solidarity with the Republicans and the Reds in Spain were carried out, this Paris was slowly putting out its lights in the midst of doubt. And as for the bourgeois and plebeian Paris of victory, with its Versailles hardness, with its veterans now turned pacifists, its impulses for the Russian Revolution, its good business, it too was fading into the background of collective memory.

Beginning in the middle of 1937, we had the feeling that the Spanish Republic, while proclaiming a "victory government" under Negrín, was actually entering its death throes. This feeling spread through the masses like a falling dusk, bringing with it a vague mood of powerlessness. Marx Dormoy uncovered the conspiracy of the "Cagoulards" and we knew that the question of the complicity of generals and marshals—Pétain and Franchet d'Espèrey—had been raised at the Council of Ministers. One academic told me, "They won't be touched. It would be a crime against France. We don't want any Tukhachevsky affair, here!" Bombs set by pro-Fascist right-wingers were going off here and there, at L'Étoile, at Villejuif, shredding some poor people while the General Confederation of Employers—of the employers who were paying for the bombs—was busy denouncing the

extremism of the left, the foreign refugees and the "Frente crapular" ... A civil war in France had been aborted, and perhaps this was thanks to men such as Léon Blum and Marx Dormoy, in spite of their many errors. Italian armament was penetrating nearly everywhere; Nazi influence was working its way among journalists, parliamentarians, and diplomats; the military admired Franco; British conservatives were leaving France alone on the Continent, face-to-face with two totalitarian powers and a civil war lost by the people. The vast majority of the population, radically minded and sympathetic to Socialism, felt vaguely defeated. "The Popular Front," people said, "has become a mystification; the Cagoulards are armed and we're not; two-thirds of the heads of the army, half the *préfets*, and at least half of the police chiefs are with them ..." I do not know if these estimates were accurate but I do think that they were not far from the truth.

The working class and the left-leaning middle classes with which it often overlapped—that is to say the majority of universal suffrage—were simultaneously subjected to the demoralizing influences of the defeats in Spain and the massacres in Russia. Of course there were different ways of being demoralized. Some did so by maintaining a blind faith—a wavering and despairing faith that shuts the eyes. Others resorted to a brand of anti-Stalinism such that I could hear working-class militants wondering if the Nazis weren't better and if Hitler was not being slandered by "exaggerating" his anti-Semitism. Others still ended up in a dead-end pacifism. Anything, rather than war! One militant, speaking at a trade union conference, exclaimed: "Better slavery than death!" In response to a primary-school teacher who was defending this position of collapse, I said, "But slavery, too, is death, while resistance is only the risk of death." I knew men well who espoused all these tendencies: estimable, honest, intelligent men who eighteen months earlier would have fought valiantly for revolutionary Spain or for a new democracy.

The Spanish collapse provoked a catastrophic breakdown of morale in France. However invisible this might have been to the superficial observer, it was absolutely clear to the initiated eye. The most deep-rooted Socialist affections, which amount to the same as the noble affections of mankind in general, were almost erased within a

few months. Thousands of refugees were crossing the Pyrenees, only to be met by a French constabulary that robbed them, bullied them, and interned them in unspeakable concentration camps. The CGT, which was reasonably prosperous, would not dream of lavishing its funds upon assistance for this flood of heroes and victims. Consumed by discord, governments veered towards the Right, as the Premiership swung from Léon Blum to Daladier, then to Daladier with Reynaud at his elbow. Little by little, merciless legislation (which was never rigorously applied, precisely because it was so merciless) was enacted against the refugees. The masses abandoned the losers of the war, and the issues that they mutely embodied. It would have been quite easy to accept them to ordinary life, settle them in districts with a declining population, arrange for families to take in the children and youngsters—and even to recruit from their numbers one or two crack divisions for the defense of France, herself under threat of attack. None of these ideas occurred to anybody.

I could see how the psychological mechanism of repression worked. Enjoying so much prosperity themselves, men turned away from so much suffering. Living themselves beneath the shadow of so many dangers, men turned away from the spectacle of so many defeats, inflicted after so many struggles. They were annoyed with the Spaniards for having been beaten. Comrades who had welcomed them at first began to disengage from them, with a kind of anger. Later, on the highways at the time of France's fall, I heard excellent folk speaking contemptuously of the Spanish refugees. I could illustrate factually each line that I am writing, but what purpose would it serve? In the proofreaders' union we had refugees from abroad dying of hunger, and their brothers allowed them to have one or two days' work a week—this at the end of endless, persistent pleading, although most of our members lacked nothing. I battled for months to secure a miserable 300-franc grant to an old man of seventy, one of the founders of the CNT, José Negre, who was dying on a wretched bed in a concentration camp. I roused the "Elders of the CGT," I had an interview with Jouhaux, all in vain. Several old and devoted friends whom I had known as men full of generous enthusiasm now changed beyond all recognition, and we more or less broke off relations. What could we talk about?

Munich was a reflection of this state of mind in the realm of high politics. It was a surrender before Nazi force, a betrayal of our ally Czechoslovakia, a betrayal of the Soviet Union. I knew that French politicians, reactionaries but (I believe) sincere men, had come back from Berlin and were calling working-class militants in for homilies, saying how afraid they were for France—we must have peace, peace at any price, or ruin would follow. It is a fact that the immense majority of the population welcomed the shameful Munich transaction with inexpressible relief. When Daladier returned from his talks with Chamberlain, Hitler, and Mussolini, his face gloomy as usual (all his photos showed him heavy and downcast—the Prime Minister officiating over the funeral of a political system), he was amazed to find himself acclaimed; he was expecting to be hissed.

I must confess that I too felt a sense of relief at Munich. It was clear to me that this particular French nation, in this particular phase of depression, was incapable of fighting. If they had not fought to save the Republic, if they had not even been able to stop nonintervention from turning into a bloody farce, could one ask them, the day after this disappointment, to go to war for the sake of faraway Czechoslovakia? From this time they would require a period of years, a fresh accretion of energy, before they could recover their full moral integrity.

In the working-class movement, depression becomes expressed and even accentuated by division. As all values begin to be questioned, minorities stiffen into intolerance and majorities lose their bearings. The Socialist Party split at its Royan Congress. The revolutionary Left, now harried by Paul Faure's* stupid disciplinary measures, resigned and established the Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party (PSOP). By this act it lost its audience in a party of more than three hundred thousand members, isolated its few thousand followers, and started a revolutionary movement just at the time when the working class was retiring into its own demoralization. The split at Royan weakened the Socialist Party and created an unworkable alternative party.

The trade unions were shedding their active membership. Within them pacifism and anti-Stalinism, both negative ideologies, were ranged against warmongering and the blind obedience of the Communists. I had to break off relations with one small review of the far

Left edited by a libertarian veteran, Maurice Wullens, usually a most sensible man, because it was invoking the principle of free discussion as an excuse to print apologies for Nazism!

It is from this period, too, that my break with Trotsky can be dated. I had held aloof from the Trotskyist movement, within which I could not detect the hopes of the Left Opposition in Russia for a renewal of the ideology, morals, and institutions of Socialism. In the countries I knew at first hand, Belgium, Holland, France, and Spain, the tiny parties of the "Fourth International," ravaged by frequent splits and, in Paris, by deplorable feuding, amounted only to a feeble and sectarian movement out of which, I judged, no fresh thinking could emerge. The life of these groups was maintained by nothing but the prestige of the Old Man and his great, unceasing efforts, and both his prestige and the quality of his efforts deteriorated in the process. The very idea of starting an International at the moment when all international Socialist organizations were dying, when reaction was in full flood, and without support of any kind, seemed quite senseless to me. I wrote to Leon Davidovich and told him as much. I was also in disagreement with him on certain important issues in the history of the Revolution: he refused to admit that in the terrible Kronstadt episode of 1921 the responsibilities of the Bolshevik Central Committee had been simply enormous, that the subsequent repression had been needlessly barbarous, and that the establishment of the Cheka (later the GPU) with its techniques of secret inquisition had been a grievous error on the part of the revolutionary leadership, and one incompatible with any Socialist philosophy.

In what concerned Russia's contemporary problems, I recognized Trotsky's astounding vision and capacity for insights. At the time when he was writing *The Revolution Betrayed*, I had prevailed on him to include in the Opposition's program a declaration of freedom for all parties accepting the Soviet system. Blended with the flashes of his superb intelligence I could see the systematic schematizing of old-time Bolshevism, whose resurrection, in all countries of the world, he believed to be inevitable. I understood his inflexibility: he was, after all, the last survivor of a generation of giants. However, convinced as I was that great historical traditions are prolonged only by renewal, I

believed that Socialism too had to renew itself in the world of today, and that this must take place through the jettisoning of the authoritarian, intolerant tradition of turn-of-the-century Russian Marxism. I recalled, for use against Trotsky himself, a sentence of astounding vision which he had written, in 1914 I think: "Bolshevism may very well be an excellent instrument for the conquest of power, but after that it will reveal its counterrevolutionary aspects."

The only problem which revolutionary Russia, in all the years from 1917 to 1923, utterly failed to consider was the problem of liberty; the only declaration which it had to make afresh, and which it has never made, is the Declaration of the Rights of Man. I expounded these ideas in an article published in Paris as "Puissances et limites du marxisme" and in the *Partisan Review* in New York as "Marxism of Our Time." The Old Man, true to his habitual stereotypes, was pleased to see nothing in it except "an exhibition of petty bourgeois demoralization..." Deplorably misinformed by his acolytes, he wrote a long polemical essay against me—imputing to me an article of which I was not the author and which was totally at variance with my frequently expressed opinions. The Trotskyist journals refused to publish my corrections. In the hearts of the persecuted I encountered the same attitudes as in their persecutors. Contagion through combat has its own natural logic: thus the Russian Revolution proved, despite itself, to be the continuation of certain ancient traditions stemming from the despotism it had just overthrown. Slandered, executed, and murdered, Trotskyism was displaying symptoms of an outlook in symmetry with that of the very Stalinism against which it had taken its stand, and by which it was being ground into powder... I am well enough acquainted with the integrity of its militants to know that they, too, are unhappy with it. But it is impossible to struggle against social and psychological facts of this magnitude with impunity. You cannot cling to an authoritarian doctrine that belongs to the past without paying the price. I was heartbroken by it all, because it is my firm belief that the tenacity and willpower of some men can, despite all odds, break with the traditions that suffocate, and withstand the contagions that bring death. It is painful, it is difficult, but it must be possible. I abstained from any counter-polemic.

I continue to believe that the Left Opposition in Russia was essentially a movement anchored in the defense of freedom to think, freedom to criticize, and workers' rights. Our Oppositional movement in Russia had not been Trotskyist, since we had no intention of attaching it to a personality, rebels as we ourselves were against the cult of the Leader. We regarded the Old Man only as one of our greatest comrades, an elder member of the family over whose ideas we argued freely. And now, ten years later, tiny parties like that of Walter Dauge in Belgium, which had no more than a few hundred members in a district of the Borinage, termed him "our glorious leader," and any person in the circles of the "Fourth International" who went so far as to object to his propositions was promptly expelled and denounced in the same language that the bureaucracy had employed against us in the Soviet Union. Doubtless all this had little importance, but the very fact that such a vicious circle could be set up was a terrible psychological symptom of the movement's inner disintegration.

I came to the conclusion that our Opposition had simultaneously contained two opposing lines of significance. For the great majority of its members it had meant resistance to totalitarianism in the name of the democratic ideals expressed at the beginning of the Revolution. For a number of our Old Bolshevik leaders it meant, on the contrary, the defense of doctrinal orthodoxy which, while not excluding a certain tendency towards democracy, was authoritarian through and through. These two mingled strains had, between 1923 and 1928, surrounded Trotsky's vigorous personality with a tremendous aura. If, in his exile from the USSR, he had made himself the ideologist of a renewed Socialism, critical in outlook and fearing diversity less than dogmatism, perhaps he would have attained a new greatness. But he was the prisoner of his own orthodoxy, the more so since his lapses into unorthodoxy were being denounced as treason. He saw his role as that of one carrying into the world at large a movement which was not only Russian but extinct in Russia itself, killed twice over, both by the bullets of its executioners and by changes in human mentality.

And war was speeding on its way. I had known a time when the Spanish Republic could almost certainly have won in the space of a few weeks or months. In the days after the military uprising, when it

was still based in Morocco, the Moroccan Nationalists had offered to fight Franco if the Republic would only come to a generous settlement with them. The negotiations (which were conducted by a number of my friends) failed, probably because the chancelleries of Europe intimated some hostility to a reform as daring as this. Everything that had happened subsequently fitted the assumption that the Soviet Union, far from desiring victory for a Republic in which the Communist Party would not have preserved its hegemony, had instead sought to prolong the anti-Fascist resistance merely for the sake of gaining time. Once demoralization had done its work, Franco entered Barcelona in January 1939 without meeting any resistance. Towards the middle of March, the Nazis entered Prague.

It was during that same month of March that I read the *Pravda* report of Stalin's speech to the Eighteenth Party Congress. The Leader accused Britain and France of trying to "sow discord between the Soviet Union and Germany." A speech by Voroshilov confirmed the authenticity of the details of Soviet military power that had been published in a Nazi military review. Through Reiss and Krivitsky we were aware that Soviet agents had been in continual contact with the Nazi rulers. On 5 May Litvinov, the advocate of "collective security" and of the Politburo's "peace policy" within the League of Nations, resigned abruptly. These clues, among others, were a clear indication that Soviet policy would soon switch to collaboration with the Third Reich. Nevertheless, the section of the French press that was steered by Communist agents was neither willing nor able to understand anything of this; the articles I submitted to journals of the Left were rejected, and the only platform I could find was in the review *Esprit*. It was quite obvious to me that the Politburo regarded France as beaten before the battle, and was therefore tacking towards finding some accommodation with the strongest side.

An obscure journalist, one Benoist-Méchin, the author of a tolerable *History of the German Army*, asked me to meet him. I asked a left-wing publisher to give me some information about the man, and was told: "He is a former composer, a good scissors-and-paste man, of no particular political complexion." We met in a café on the Boulevard St. Michel. This character was young (about thirty-five), featureless,

bespectacled, reserved in speech, and most attentive. After ten minutes I was absolutely sure that he must be working simultaneously for the Deuxième Bureau and some other organization, probably German. He told me that he was thinking of writing a history of the Civil War in the Ukraine.

"Do you know Russian?" I asked him.

"No."

"Have you traveled in the Ukraine?"

"No."

"Have you studied the Russian Revolution?"

"Not particularly..."

Our conversation wandered on to current affairs, and I could see that my interlocutor was primarily interested in the attitude of the Ukrainian peasantry in case of war. I cut the conversation short, and said, "The Ukraine is disaffected, but will defend itself furiously against any aggression. And besides, what is on the agenda today is not a war between the Soviet Union and Germany, but rather a new partition of Poland." I left Monsieur Benoist-Méchin, double agent, in a state of utter perplexity, since nobody in the relevant departments had this hypothesis in mind. (We never met again; in 1942, Benoist-Méchin became a leading figure in the Vichy regime.)

London and Paris began belated and laborious negotiations with Moscow that went from bluffs to delays, from delays to feigned agreements. Suddenly, in the Kremlin, on 22 August 1939, Molotov and Ribbentrop appended their signatures to a pact of aggression against Poland, while in a nearby building the British and French military missions were still holding discussions with Voroshilov. Daladier made the mistake of suspending the publication of the Communist press; it would have been instructive to watch them turning their fire from one day to the next and denounce "the imperialist plutocracies" after having denounced "fascist barbarism." The now illegal Communist press quickly adopted this new language. The sudden turn succeeded in demoralizing the working class and the left in general. In the eyes of the anti-Stalinists it was an unspeakable betrayal; in the eyes of the Communists it was an excellent maneuver which freed their hands. In reality it was the abandonment of the people of Poland —particularly the Jews—to the Nazis, the abandonment of the de-

mocracies threatened by totalitarianism, the acquiescence of the USSR to the launching of the war. From the Socialist point of view, it was a stupid betrayal; from the Russian point of view, an idiotic betrayal—for it was obvious that the Nazi Reich, once victorious in Central and Western Europe, would turn inevitably, sooner or later, with all its might, against an isolated Russia now compromised before all the democracies. It was condemning Russia to invasion, in order to gain time.

When it came, the war found the mass of the people in the worst possible confusion of feeling and thought. I was ill and utterly alone. I lived in a working-class district, at Pré-St. Gervais. Most of my comrades who lived nearby had run off to the provinces as soon as mobilization began, terrified of being bombed. I saw practically no one. Every man for himself, that's it—no time for fooling around. Publications ceased appearing of their own accord. On the day of the general mobilization, I found my way to the Socialist Party's headquarters, in a drinking and dancing quarter below the Place Pigalle; the alley, old and bourgeois-looking, was deserted, the building itself empty. I had been the only visitor there the whole afternoon. Séverac,* pallid and resigned, was seeing to the routine business. Maurice Paz told me of a surprising statement by Henri de Man*: "Germany does not want a general war, a settlement can be reached while mobilization is still on . . ." The PSOP had lost its influence in the Paris region and was in a serious crisis of morale, having been abandoned by its most prominent leaders. Daniel Guérin,[2] the author of *Fascism and Big Business*, who was beginning to stand out as a revolutionary leader and whom I met in a printshop in Montmartre, was feverishly preparing for his departure to Oslo. Not one group with any life in it was still on the scene.

At the Gare de l'Est the conscripts were departing, without any singing of the "Marseillaise," in a silence heavy with anxiety and uninspired bravery. The women were not weeping very much. I shall never forget the old worker I saw staggering up a Métro staircase, talking to himself: "*Ah! nom de Dieu! Ah! nom de Dieu!* Two wars in one lifetime!" A cartoon in a pacifist paper showed a bill-sticker pasting

2. Guérin was leaving for Norway on a mission for the International Workers' Front to set up an office in Oslo that would continue to function in the event of war.

up mobilization posters and explaining to a drunk, "Hey, it's war." "Which war?" the other replied blankly.

This was a war that nobody was keen on. The wealthy classes had no desire to fight against Fascism, which they preferred to the Popular Front. The intelligentsia judged that a country like France, with a low birthrate, just beginning to recover from its losses of 1914–18, was in no mood for further bloodshed. The pacifism of the Left reflected the same feeling. The workers and the middle-class folk were vaguely conscious of being betrayed, had no confidence in the Government or the General Staff, and could not follow how it was necessary to fight for Poland after having deserted Socialist Austria, Socialist Spain, and our ally Czechoslovakia. Overnight the most forceful elements in the working-class suburbs, namely the Communists, had become pacifists, "anti-imperialists," and supporters of the new "peace policy of the Soviet Union." Maurice Thorez, the leader of the Communist Party, deserted; Duclos, the Vice President of the Chamber, left for Moscow; a few deputies resigned from the Party; and the rest went to jail. The general opinion was that there would be very little fighting and that everybody would be quite safe behind the impregnable Maginot Line.

At the Café Deux Magots I met old Harmel who I knew wrote editorials for *Messidor*, under the name of Léon Jouhaux. At the printshop, we would just exchange silent nods. This time he approached me with warmth: "Ha! You were right all the time, Serge! And now we've really been screwed! I saw Soviet Ambassador Souritz the day before the Moscow Pact, and we chatted as usual. The next day, I rushed to see him, furious and, for God's sake, I had reason to be! The poor man told me that he was as surprised, as dumbfounded as I was..."

Paris waited calmly for the bombing to start: there were blackouts, long wails from the sirens at night and sometimes in broad daylight, the crackle of the antiaircraft barrage, descents into the cellar shelters, and ridiculous trench shelters dug in the public gardens. The rich people were taking themselves off to the Mediterranean coast. A phony war indeed.

The walls were covered with posters: "*We will win because we are the strongest*...!" A right-wing writer, Thierry Maulnier, denounced

the fear of victory that dominated the reactionary parties. They knew the chances of our defeat—not without reason—and "the defeat of Germany would mean the collapse of the authoritarian systems which constitute the principal bulwark against Communist revolution, possibly even the immediate Bolshevization of Europe..." The Royalist Action Française remained pro-Italian.

The success of my novel *Midnight in the Century* spared me the hazards of internment. I saw Georges Duhamel: he had aged ten years at a stroke, eyelids inflamed and voice weak; he was already plumbing the depths of the disaster. I also met Jean Giraudoux, who was unpretentiously elegant, and dejected: his "Appeal to the Workers of France" had, despite his high position in the Ministry of Information, been censored. A great writer, and a member of the Government, wanting to speak "to the workers"—what a weird idea! In the same period a comrade of mine who had volunteered for the French Army wrote in a letter that he was "happy to be fighting for the cause of freedom and democracy." For this he was severely reprimanded by his commander: "We are fighting for France and for nothing else!" Jean Malaquais,* the author of *Les Javanais*, who was serving on the Maginot Line, told me of the utter passivity of the troops at the front, who had no idea of anything and talked only of women and booze. The most discussed book of the year was the one by Jean-Paul Sartre, an analysis in novel form of a case of neurosis, called *Nausea*. An appropriate title.

The publishing house of Gallimard had a novel in the press by a young author, dealing with the Spanish Civil War, but decided not to publish it. The subject was too hot: it might upset the Italians. Bernard Grasset were preparing a new edition of my book *Year One of the Russian Revolution*, and the Ministry of Information asked them to postpone its appearance until more suitable times; in other words, this was a rather hot subject too. There was an order forbidding too much publicity about my *Portrait of Stalin*, which had just appeared... Publishers were refusing any works that were anti-Hitler. There was neither freedom nor intellectual purpose. The war even lacked an ideology.

In a few articles, I analyzed the occupation of the Baltic states and

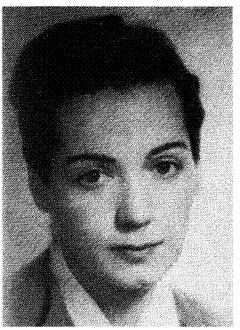
the Soviet attack on Finland as the beginning of another war, in the midst of the Stalin-Hitler collaboration, "sealed in blood," in Stalin's words. Harboring no illusions, the men in the Russian government were taking precautions against their current allies. One of Daladier's collaborators invited me to see him at the Hôtel Matignon.

"What do you think of the Stalin-Hitler pact?"

"It's an opportunistic pact between mortal enemies who are desperately afraid of each other. However, they may well work together for some time, especially if the Political Bureau believes that the Third Reich will lose the war. Already, the propaganda is preparing the ground."

While Nazi industry was manufacturing its armored divisions, Goering was planting rosebushes in the Siegfried Line. In January 1940 a civil servant in the Quai d'Orsay told me that the Third Reich was undertaking huge preparations in the East—which was true, no doubt—but it was also making equally huge preparations in the West. On the 8th or 9th of May, *Le Figaro* stated that the massing of German forces on the borders of the Low Countries was probably only a bluff. I spent the evening of the 9th at Léon Werth's. He had been an acute and humane romantic chronicler of the last war's aftermath, but he was writing no more; he lived in uncertainty, in ceaseless self-questioning about the values that had disappeared. There Saint-Exupéry, in uniform, stretched his great body on a couch: Saint-Exupéry was still undertaking reconnaissance over enemy territory, and he was devising a new defense system for aerodromes. He was not sure whether he was of the Left or the Right, reluctant to locate himself anywhere among discredited parties, inhibited by his family name and his relatives, disillusioned by the Spanish tragedy, living out this end of a world with his whole soul, even though his intellect was unable to master its outstanding features. On that particular evening, he was feverishly restless, itching to go, and almost silent. I asked him if it was true that the Allied air force would continue to be inferior to the enemy's for a considerable time. The only answer he gave me was a few despairing words with gestures to match. I went out into the lovely Paris night, literally full of anxiety. On the morning of the 10th, the newspapers reported the invasion of Belgium and Holland.

Within six days the Panzers reached Sedan. Fleeing Belgians told me of the massacre of the French cavalry in the Ardennes: cavalry against tanks and planes! The communiqués invent a new phrase, "mopping-up operations." The map shows plainly that the enemy is aiming for the heart of France, and Paris is threatened. On the midday of 3 June the summer sky is filled with the noise of engines: it sounds like an army of the air, but nothing can be seen in the blue above. Then come the dull explosions of bombs bursting, and the crackle of antiaircraft fire. My wife[3] and I follow this invisible battle from a balcony where the windowpanes are trembling. Innocent blood is streaming at this very moment in our midst: at the idea of this, so great a revulsion sweeps over us that everything else is now blotted out of our minds. However, Paris wears no trace of gloom afterwards, but keeps the festive air with which the sun always endows it.



Laurette Séjourné became Serge's companion in Paris in 1938

Two factions in the Government begin to clash, almost openly. The clique favoring immediate peace, the clique of reaction and future surrender, demands power for Pétain. The name of the banker Paul Baudouin, unknown up till now, crops up in every conversation. Its opponent is the party favoring resistance, which includes Reynaud, Daladier, Mandel, and Léon Blum. The Socialists are divided, the Paul Faure tendency remaining pacifistic. I hear it said that in certain quarters lists of names have been drawn up for arrest. Mandel, now Minister of the Interior, begins the purge of Paris. Helmeted *Gardes mobiles*, their rifles loaded, surround the student cafés in the Boulevard St. Michel. Any foreigners whose papers are not in order are packed into lorries that take them to police headquarters. Many of them are anti-Nazi refugees, for the other foreigners' papers are of course quite in order. Pestered by the red tape of the Préfectures, pulled this way and that by left-wing influences, right-wing influences,

3. Laurette Séjourné,* Serge's third wife.

and other more mysterious ones, how can a refugee be in order? The anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist refugees are due to experience yet more prisons: those of the Republic that was their last place of asylum on this continent, which in its death throes is losing its wits. Spaniards and International Brigaders who beat back Fascism outside Madrid are treated as if they carried the plague. Meanwhile, with documents in order and purses full, Spanish Falangists, Italian Fascists (still neutrals), and White Russians (and how many actual Nazis were there behind these easy disguises?) walked at liberty through the length and breadth of France. "Home Defense" is a farce, and a horribly symbolic one at that.

Vain appeals reach me from the Belgian frontier. The police are letting the flood of Belgian refugees pass by, but are halting Belgium's anti-Nazi and Spanish exiles in their tracks. The Gestapo is advancing in line with the tanks, but the reply is "You don't have visas! You can't cross!" A few will get through when the police make themselves scarce. Some of the Spaniards pick up the weapons that the police have abandoned, and start to fight the Nazi tanks... Sneevliet asks me to get him a visa, but in the general stampede there is no one to speak to in Paris. (Sneevliet will be shot, with eight of his comrades, in Amsterdam on 15 April 1942.)

The press is still making reassuring remarks—"The Weygand Line will hold fast!"—meanwhile "German infiltration" has got as far as the Somme, reaching Forges-les-Eaux... In the June sunlight, the Champs-Elysées still keeps its smiling face. I am resolved to put off leaving until almost the last train, for I still feel some vague hope that the situation will mend, and I have practically no money. When Paris ends the world ends; useless to see the truth, how could one bear to acknowledge it? On Sunday the 9th, I see Cabinet ministers moving house. Cars, blanketed with mattresses and overloaded with trunks, hurry off towards the city's southern gates. Shops close. The Paris of these last evenings is splendid. The great empty boulevards enter into the night with an extraordinary nobility. The darkened squares exude an air of calm and dormant power. People, too, are calm, showing greater fortitude in disaster than they seemed to before. The idea arises that they did not deserve this defeat. History had turned against

them and the government of this people was so different from the people! What could the man in the street do if the French metal industry was crumbling away for lack of investment? What power did he have over capital?

On the morning of 10 June, I am in the Métro and see men and women on the verge of tears; all one can hear is a murmur of heartbroken rage: "Oh, the bastards!" Hands, clenched violently, screw up the newspaper which reports Italy's entry into the war—a stab in the back dealt to a man already falling. "We're betrayed even by the left!" the man next to me says. "Yes, friend, that is just it."

Last images of Paris: from the high ground of the Porte des Lilas, the outer suburbs are overshadowed by a strange bluish mist, a suspicious-looking gas or smoke drifting towards Belleville and Montmartre. They say that the petrol tanks at Rouen are burning. The outskirts of the Gare du Nord, empty and pale as evening falls; the shops with their iron shutters up; people on their doorsteps, listening to the distant moan of shells. All the shopkeepers feel personally threatened: it's the beginning of the end of the world, isn't it? The Boulevard de Sébastopol in complete darkness, practically deserted; underneath, the Reaumur-Sébastopol Métro station with its human hotchpotch burdened under an animal despair: the trains are late... Good-bye to all that—let us be off on foot, as best we may. At night, around the Gare de Lyon, we sense violence in the air because, they say, there are no more trains, and in any case no more room in the station... A providential taxi with a one-eyed driver takes us through the Fontainebleau woods, underneath the barrage of shells, along roads thronged with traffic. "Put your lights out, for God's sake! There's an alert on!" men in steel helmets shout through the darkness, but nobody listens to them. Four of us are making the journey: my wife, my son, a Spanish friend[4] who has joined us at the last moment, and myself. I have raked together 4,000 francs for our escape (this would be about $100).

Our flight is accompanied by a sense of release bordering at times on gaiety. All our possessions have been reduced to a few bundles. Only the other day I was peeved at not being able to find a brief jotting

4. Narciso Molins y Fábrega.*

among my papers, and now, lo and behold, books, personal objects, documents, manuscripts, all disappear at one stroke without effecting any real emotion. (It is true that I am used to it.) A whole segment of old Europe is caving in, events are unfolding in their predestined course. We had been living in a suffocating blind alley. For years now, or so it seems to me, France—and perhaps the whole West—was dominated by the feeling that "it could not last." *Last Days*, that was the name Henri Poulaille and I had decided on for a weekly that was stillborn. What was it that "could not last"? Everything. The frontiers, Danzig, the fascisms, the impotent parliaments, the putrid literature and press, this enervated workers' movement, this heap of iniquities and absurdities. This was not defeatism. All the revolutionaries, together with the whole French population, would gladly have fought against fascism and for a Third Republic determined to survive, if this had been possible. But only a living society can be defended and this one had reached a stage of decomposition that was too advanced. Nobody believed in anything anymore, because nothing in fact was possible anymore: certainly not a revolution, with this working class gorged on fresh Camembert, pleasant wine, and ancient ideas which had become mere words—a working class, moreover, ringed on all sides by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Franco's Spain, and insular, Conservative Great Britain. And certainly not a counterrevolution either, with this bourgeoisie incapable of daring or thinking and, ever since the workers' occupation of the factories, sick with fright as well. Now it is all over: the rotten tooth has been pulled out, the leap into the unknown has been made. It will be black and terrible, but those who survive will see a new world born. There are very few people who have this new sense which modern man is so painfully developing: the sense of history. The folk who are fleeing with us as defeat sets in, along the highways of France and on the last trains, realize all the same that "it had to happen."

All at once I re-experience the deepest and most invigorating feeling of my childhood that, I believe, has made a lifelong impression on me. I grew up among Russian revolutionary exiles who knew that the Revolution was advancing towards them, inexorably, out of the depths of the future. In simple words they taught me to have faith in man-

kind and to wait steadfastly for the necessary cataclysms. They waited for half a century, in the midst of persecution. With a Spanish friend traveling with us, we can muster quite a fine collection of wrecked regimes. We wake at dawn, in the middle of open country, a thin rain mingled with sunshine falling on our faces, and we decide that, this time, the way forward for the European revolution is already half-clear. Over Nazism, our conqueror, we feel a resounding superiority: we know that it is doomed.

And the collapse continued, the collapse swept us on. And farce, monstrous farce that brings on bitter laughter, at times hides the tragic side. The tragic side is the one hundred thousand dead. Amiens half-destroyed, bridges desperately and bloodily defended for no apparent reason, columns of refugees randomly bombed, children lost in the demented rout at railway stations... We leave it all behind when we cross the Loire. When we do cross—on foot, carrying rucksacks—at Nevers, the bridge is fortified by two low squares of sand bags, all white, nicely fresh and clean. Some territorials are sitting on them, smoking their pipes. Have the officers in this country never seen how you fortify a bridge? It is as ridiculous as a bad stage set in a cheap theater. Entire military staffs are in flight with their scribes and secretaries, leaving behind airfields full of planes, columns of brand-new tanks, motorized troop units... At a turning in the road we come face-to-face with some Paris buses, and the drivers of the Montrouge–Gare de l'Est explain that they're taking their families to the Pyrenees because the company told them, "Save the machines, but you'll have to pay for the petrol yourselves!" "The company doesn't give a damn about our families!" For us, café owners push up the price of a coffee; an old shopkeeper at her till, in a town full to bursting with waves of people in flight, refuses to give me a bit of string... A cheerful soldier shouts out to her, "Keep your old rubbish for the Boche! You old skinflint!" Everything is falling apart but small business will survive.

Along with the fleeing army, with the refugees from Paris, Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne, from Belgium, Holland, and scores of other places, we invade charming, pious, well-heeled little towns, slumbering around the church and the splendid house of the local rent collector. Here folk live in the darkness of old houses, skimping on the

electricity, never buying a book, but patiently, from the beginning of time, filling up their woolen stockings with cash and amassing their little fortunes. "Is it really possible?" moan the gossips. "What's happening? Do you understand anything about it, sir?" The soldiers reply as one man: "We've been sold out, betrayed, what else? By the officers who've hopped it with their fancy women, quick as you please, by the General Staff, by the Cagoulards who wanted their revenge on the Popular Front—it's all obvious..." General Staff, militarism, reaction, big bourgeoisie, all have been discredited at one swoop. A soldier is telling me hilarious stories about the debacle of officers who fled in cars, "to save the regimental flag." I ask, "Suppose for a moment that the radio had announced: There is no longer a General Staff, all the officers have been discharged! Soldiers, defend France yourselves, dig in as best you can!" He replies, "Then it wouldn't have all been like this at all, oh no!" And that is quite obvious.

We have nothing left now, so we look for some place of sanctuary. Several have been offered or promised to us. It used to be quite the thing for people to invite themselves along to Paris: "Of course you must come and stay with me in Dordogne or Gironde if dear old Paris ever gets too disagreeable for you! You will be able to taste my little stock of wine!" However, my wife is more or less hounded, ever so politely, out of a château which is the home of an anarchist well-endowed with worldly goods—this on a day of torrential rain which pours over the dainty slate turrets, the artificial stream, and the romantic rock garden. We enter an abandoned farm in the middle of the woods; a friend, a Socialist journalist, who discloses that he is its owner, begs us to be off at once: "Take my car, but get out quickly because they are coming this way!" We clear off, and this former Socialist explains to me that he is now a convert to collaboration with Hitler and to strong government, which must inevitably be military rule: the power of the utterly bankrupt, in a word. One sanctuary is still promised to me, with a pacifist author. It is a pretty little house surrounded by flowers, but its door is shut and well guarded; the writer, Jean Giono, has gone to the hills to meditate. The police arrest us and then let us depart, equally inclined to meditate. These are not simply personal misfortunes, it

happens in almost every case. Refugees are suspected as enemies by the inhabitants of the prosperous provinces: they drive prices up, gobble the food supplies, steal bicycles, and among them, just imagine, there are Spaniards, ruffians—God help us! We would gladly have embraced the peasant woman (not a wealthy person) who offers us coffee and shelter on a day of teeming rain, and refuses to take our pennies.

It becomes clear that ready money and the sordid influence of prosperity have caused a serious moral deterioration. It never occurs to the syndicalist militants of a certain town to give their adored meeting hall over to the cause of hospitality. Various town halls, not reactionary ones, refuse to pay the refugees' allowance to anyone from Spain. For people to be refugees twice over is excessive, surely.

The working-class organizations, the Socialist Party and CGT, have melted into nothing. Old-time Socialists concentrate on keeping their positions in the municipal administrations where they are serving. Fragments of the far Left—primary-school teachers, anarchistic tradesmen, Freemasons, and Socialists—still continue to think, and keep solidarity alive. In one small town invaded by the straggling army—actually Agen—we meet some old anarchos who have known me for thirty years. Back then, when I joined the proletarian dictatorship, they thought I was a careerist; they are happy to realize that they were mistaken. We meet in a secluded spot on the riverbank. Moroccan riflemen, idle and sour, wander along by the stream, pondering upon the glory of the Empire...

On a highway of Gascony, amid the chaos of fugitive lorries, some Belgian magistrates, dining on the balcony of a little café, tell me, "There is going to be a new regime in France—Hitler insists on it." People weep to hear the loudspeakers announcing the news of the Armistice. Daily I follow the intrigues of the Government at Bordeaux. Some of the Socialists of Agen have returned from there with the latest information. "Hitler does not want France, now trampled underfoot, to have any more Parliaments. The system of government must be Fascist. That is the unwritten clause in the Armistice. Laval and Baudouin declare that Britain will come to terms within three months. The invasion of the British Isles is well in hand."

A man can live, and keep his spirits up, in a tent under the rain, as my son and Narciso did. A man can sleep, and sleep well, in a stinking, overpriced hovel next to the slaughterhouse, as we did. He can cook his meals in a school and work in cafés, for the Age of Waiting has begun . . . I go out to work. The problem is to find food for tomorrow or next week. We send SOS messages to Switzerland and across the Atlantic. On our last postage stamps disappointments and small betrayals rain by the score. Suddenly I become aware of a harsh revelation: that now we political refugees, we cornered revolutionaries, are utterly beaten, because certain of our comrades are no longer our comrades, so demoralized and defeated are they to the quick of their hearts, and among us a squalid battle is beginning for places in the last lifeboat from the sinking ship. However, from Switzerland and America breathtaking replies reach us. These letters, from the poet J.-P. Samson* and from Dwight Macdonald*—two men I have never seen in my life—seem to clasp my hands in the dark. I can hardly believe it. So then, let us hold on.

Little towns on the south coast are slumbering peacefully as though nothing was happening. The shock of the earthquake has still not touched here. We reach Marseilles three weeks too late: all seats in the lifeboats are taken. In drawing up visa lists, both in America and here, the leading figures of the old exiled parties were, it seems, determined to exclude the militants of the far Left, whose very names might be compromising to Ministerial eyes. Besides, everybody is making their escape through the political family network: groupings are of use now only for that purpose. So much the worse for the man of no party who has dared to think only in terms of Socialism in all its vastness! All of my party, all of it, has been shot or murdered, and so I am alone, a curiously disturbing figure. People meet, people shake hands, and each one keeps for himself and those close to him the address of the American gentleman who sees to visas and relief work. Faces whose strength shone out to me in the old days, in Moscow, Vienna, or Berlin, I now see twitching hysterically. Think of it: the fourth exile, the seventh flight in twenty years!

Marseilles, flushed and carefree with its crowded bars, its alleys in the old port festooned with whores, its old bourgeois streets with lat-

tice windows, its lifeless wharves, and its brilliant seascapes, is first and foremost a "Red city," but its exact shade is Off-Red, Dirty-Red, or Racket-Red, so to speak. The Vichy regime has sacked the Socialist city council and the key man in the new administration is Sabiani, a real gangster from Doriot's party. The man in the street knows what's what pretty well: "Nothing one can do while the Nazi occupation lasts. After that, we settle matters with the bastards. That'll be it—a fun time and some faces bashed in!"

How many exiles are there tucked away in small hotels, at the end of their tether? We have the German emigration, the Austrian, the Czech, the Dutch, the Belgian, the Italian, the Spanish, and two or three Russian ones—plus some Romanians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, and Bulgarians. Not forgetting the Parisians! Rich Jews of all nations are selling, buying, and selling back documents, visas, currency, and tasty tidbits of information. Little gangs of specialists supply them with perfect forgeries of dollars on the "Black Bourse." And the poor Jews of all nations are running through numberless varieties of terror and courage, anticipating every fate they can imagine lying ahead.

Our mob of fugitives includes first-rate brains of all types who now count for nothing through the mere fact of daring to say *No!* (most of them rather quietly) to totalitarian oppression. In our ranks are enough doctors, psychologists, engineers, educationists, poets, painters, writers, musicians, economists, and public men to vitalize a whole great country. Our wretchedness contains as much talent and expertise as Paris could summon in the days of her prime, and yet all that is seen are hunted, terribly tired men at the limit of their nervous resources. Here is a beggar's alley gathering the remnants of revolutions, democracies, and crushed intellects. We sometimes tell ourselves that it would be tremendous if only five in a hundred of these forsaken men could manage to cross the Atlantic, and there rekindle the flame of battle in their hearts. If it had not been for Varian Fry's* American Relief Committee, a goodly number of refugees would have had no reasonable course open to them but to jump into the sea from the height of the transporter bridge, a certain enough method.

Those with the most scars take the shock best. These are the young revolutionary workers or semi-intellectuals who have passed through

countless prisons and concentration camps. They are difficult to rescue, because nobody knows them, because the old conformist parties have no sympathy for them, because the governments of the New World are afraid of them (subversives . . .), because they possess nothing, and because every police force is out to catch them. Our beggars' alley is full of prowlers—the Sûreté, the hotel and lodging-house patrol, the Gestapo, the OVRA, the Falangist police. Every week people disappear. Hunger is another prowler to reckon with. But we do not panic. Not many of us have very high spirits, but those who are spent come out to coffee exactly as if they still had some spark of life left.

The French, whether intellectuals or militants, have no intention of emigrating for some time. Prisoners of habit, they do not realize the full extent of the catastrophe, and have vague hopes of some tolerable way out. Among the intellectuals there is a general tendency to adapt themselves. Various militants tell me, quite simply, "Our place is here," and they are right. Among the notable writers, the surrealist André Breton is the only one who is anxious to cross the Atlantic; among the painters, André Masson. It is evident that, in the first wave of confusion, many people are fooled by the "National Revolution" and the personal glamour of the "Soldier of Verdun," that old man of over eighty who every morning drinks the bitter cup of defeat, retching with disgust but behaving with a repulsive subservience. In the course of the winter these mists melt away: reality is too insistent. The suppression of the Socialist press, the stupid rechristenings of the streets hitherto named after Rousseau, Anatole France, Jean Jaurès, and Pierre Curie, the official anti-Semitism, the ruthless rationing—all are instructive. In the Rue Saint Ferréol people crowd in front of a rotisserie to see a single chicken being roasted, a prodigious sight! The gulls of the port are so hungry that they come hovering around windows they know to be charitable. This degrading poverty, fastening upon a country so prosperous, does more to open people's eyes than any propaganda that could be devised.

The propaganda of the Allies, lacking as it does any social content, is inferior to the Nazis' demagogy, which is always talking in terms of the New Order and the "European Revolution." However, Wavell's victories in Africa fortunately make up for the shortcomings of the

London radio. Gaullism is arising spontaneously and fairly generally; Socialist ideas are sprouting unceremoniously everywhere, even as the Socialist Party collapses into silence. Socialist delegates vote in favor of the Vichy regime whilst Blum goes off to prison and Dormoy to house arrest. One of the Party's most capable brains, Rossi (Angelo Tasca), an old adversary of Mussolini who worked with Léon Blum and who, a month before the fall of Paris, had argued passionately in my hearing for a creed founded on liberty, has joined with Spinasse in supporting the Marshal's "national revolution." *L'Effort*, the organ of these Socialist flunkeys, prints the verbiage of the Nazi agent Marcel Déat. I know Rossi well and Spinasse a little; I try to understand. Tall, bony, angular skull, well-shaped head of a mountain peasant, Spinasse always tended to idealize the newness of capitalist organization and doubtless discovered a hidden talent as a theoretician of state capitalism, demoralized as he was by the shoddy collapse of the Party. In the case of Rossi, I can only see an accommodation with the new situation as a result of moral attrition—perhaps in the hope of saving his extensive archives of the workers' movement. The Paul Faure tendency is equally accommodating, and negotiates with the Marshal—not under any illusions, I think, purely to avoid persecution and the mass dismissal of tens of thousands of left-wing officials and teachers. On this point the negotiations are successful. My friend Lucien Laurat,* one of the most erudite Marxists in the Socialist Party, disappeared senselessly... He had been called up (aged forty, severely shortsighted) to the Antiaircraft Defense, and posted to the rear armed with a useless machine gun; the three men did not even have a pair of binoculars between them to observe suspect planes. In the great shambles of the rout, they were instructed to retreat on foot before the enemy, which was advancing at full speed, in tanks. Laurat was captured—as were one and a half million others.

I met some determined Gaullists, left Catholics, and youth from the Chantiers de la Jeunesse who were beginning to conspire together because they saw the intractable problems ahead. We spoke firmly and with trust. Some had believed themselves to be almost fascists and their eyes were opened. I left them with respect and confidence, sure that my words were not wasted on them. "What are you going to

do," I asked some of them during a secret meeting, "what will you do on the day of liberation, if the streets are suddenly filled with red flags?" One young man blurted out, "I'd shoot at them!" But the disapproval of the others, of all, was such that when I saw him a few days later he had changed completely. The left Catholics are morally and intellectually sound. Priests aid the most persecuted refugees. And one of them said to me: "The only people we will never convert to Christianity are the old bourgeois Catholics . . ."

Our very existence is hanging from slender threads, which may break at any moment. Several times the total occupation of France is rumored to be in the offing. And the long-awaited visas are not here, still not here! This much must be said: because of their reactionary or bureaucratic leanings, most of the American republics have displayed neither humanity nor sense in their immigration policies. Visas were granted in the merest trickle, in a manner so criminally stingy that thousands upon thousands of real victims, all fine human beings, were left to the mercies of the Nazis. People with money and no political commitments got visas, generally speaking, rather easily; a host of anti-Fascist fighters did not get them at all. Visas for practically every American state were habitually sold, at more or less exorbitant prices, and the Vichy officials conducted a trade in exit permits. A fine trade this, selling lifebelts on a shipwrecked continent! Thanks to my friends in the United States, I was granted a visa for Mexico by President Lázaro Cárdenas, to whom tens of thousands of Spaniards owe their lives . . .

With some good friends of mine I was living for the moment in a tumbledown château, which we nicknamed "Espervisa." André Breton used to write poetry in the greenhouse there under the November sun. I wrote some pages of a novel, not, however, from any love of literature. For this age must be witnessed: the witness passes, but his testimony manages to endure—and life still goes on. Others, turned rescuers by profession—who included two soldiers from Dunkirk—worked night and day for the American Relief Committee, overwhelmed by work and the appeals from concentration camps, and in constant peril themselves. This really was a shipwreck with too many castaways.

Once I was arrested at home and released afterwards, twice caught in a street roundup, once listed for the concentration camp, once interned for several days on board ship, with the staff of the American Relief Committee. I was lucky to be a well-known writer—and with pretty powerful support. I lived in a hotel—the Hôtel de Rome—where several well-known refugees enjoyed a peace and quiet that was only relative, since several Gestapo agents hung around and the Sûreté

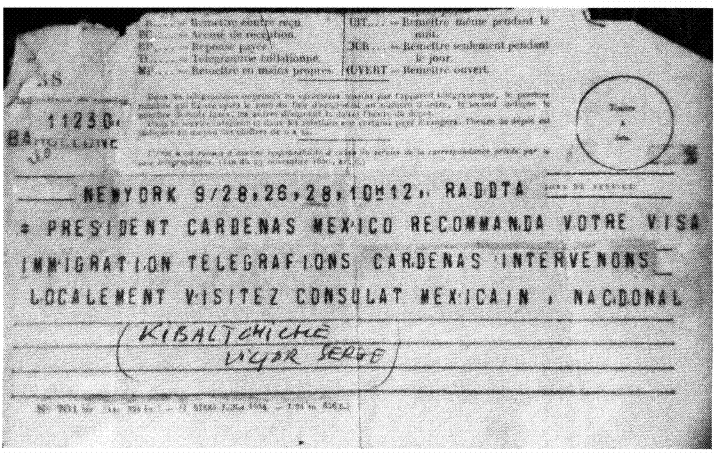
Victor Serge, Benjamin Perêt, his wife Remedios Varo, André Breton; Marseille, 1940

kept a special watch. Both at the Préfecture and among the police, at least half of the officials were pro-British and discreetly anti-Nazi, and this helped matters along. Meanwhile, at this time, the poets Walter Hasenclever* and Walter Benjamin* commit suicide. Rudolf Hilferding* and Breitscheid* are carried off out of our midst and handed to the Nazis. The lawyer Apfel happened to die—of a heart attack—right in Varian Fry's office. In the newspapers: suicide or murder of Krivitsky in Washington. Trotsky murdered in Mexico. Yes, this was just the time for the Old Man to die, the blackest hour for the working classes, just as their most ardent hour saw his highest ascendancy. (Russia is just on the eve of entering the war . . .)

The morale of my Italian friends is first-rate. These are: a bold-hearted young Marxist; an old Garibaldian, full of Latin saws; and Modigliani, an honest old reformist leader with a keen intellect. They can hear the timber of the whole edifice in their part of the world giving off loud cracks, and explain that the moment has come when Fascism's own profiteers are beginning to realize that their only hope of

safety lies in turning traitor promptly enough. An Italian senator has just written that the regime has entered its crisis, and that his circle is thinking in terms of a constitutional monarchy: salvation by putting the clock back a quarter of a century, how very easy. Modigliani—stout, with an impressive beard, his manner most patrician, his blue eyes alert and sad, his words measured, always thoughtful, and burdened with experience. Modigliani, at the age of sixty-three, still likes to keep in his inmost heart the hope that some day he can again be of service. All the same his wife Vera, still at his side, is trembling for his sake. Both of them, with their faultless dignity, incarnate the sober, noble Socialism of an age that has passed. (What has happened to them now? They were still in France at the moment when the Nazis invaded the unoccupied zone...)

Some of us whose lives are in danger eventually make our exit. The Battle of the Visas which their friends have had to wage for their sake would stand some description: a single escape would provide material for a book of Balzacian proportions, packed with unexpected incidents and dark happenings behind the scenes. I take the last ship to leave for Martinique. Permission to journey by way of Morocco and the French West Indies has just been refused me, but quite suddenly, in less than two hours, a transit visa through Martinique is granted


NEWYORK 9/28,26,28,10=12, RADDTA
PRESIDENT CARDENAS MEXICO RECOMMANDA VOTRE VISA
INMIGRATION TELEGRAFIONS CARDENAS INTERVENONS
LOCALEMENT VISITEZ CONSULAT MEXICAIN . MACDONAL
KIBALTCHICHE
LIGOR SERGE

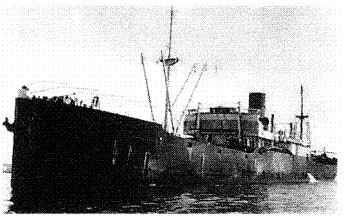
Telegram from Dwight Macdonald announcing Mexican President Cárdenas's approval of Serge's visa

me at the Préfecture... So here we are, my son and I, on a cargo boat converted into an ersatz concentration camp of the sea, the *Capitaine Paul-Lemerle*. I feel no joy at going. I would a thousand times rather have stayed, if that had been possible, but before liberation of some kind comes its way, the chances are ninety-nine out of a hundred that I shall have perished in some filthy prison. Europe, with its bullet-ridden Russias, its crushed and trampled Germanies, its invaded nations, its gutted France—how one clings to it! We are parting only to return.

On board, there are forty of us comrades, out of three hundred refugees. The rest of them have no thought except for flight, being unpolitical or, in many cases, reactionary. Out in the Atlantic, past the Sahara coast, the stars pitch up and down above our heads. We hold a meeting on the upper deck, between the funnel and the lifeboats. There are a number of appraisals that we can make. We have fresh news, of the kind that does not get into the newspapers, from Germany, Austria, Spain, and Italy. We can see the partnership between Hitler and Stalin drawing to its perilous end. We have witnessed the failure of the Nazi victory and the Nazi-inspired counterrevolution in France. All around us we have seen the growth of fresh ways of thinking, a fresh eagerness to fight, a vague but powerful consciousness of the immense changes that are necessary. In Spanish waters, the fishermen gave us the clenched-fist salute from their little sailboats. In Casablanca harbor, some friends came up to see me, and to tell me that they were looking to the future.

What can I say that is at all essential, to these forty faces gathered together in the twilight between sky and sea, and blending with the stars? I have a faint inkling of what is really essential: that we have not lost after all, that we have lost only for the moment. In the struggles of society we contributed a superabundance of consciousness and will, which greatly exceeded the forces at our command. All of us have behind us a certain number of mistakes and failings, for creative thought of any kind can proceed only with hesitating, stumbling steps... Having made this qualification, in accordance with which each must search his heart—we have been quite astoundingly right. We with our nondescript little journals, we have often seen clearly where statesmen

have floundered in ridiculous and disastrous folly. We have caught a glimpse of man resolving his own history. And we have known how to win, we must never forget that. The Russians and the Spaniards among us know what it is to take the world into their hands, to set the railways running and the factories working, to defend bombarded cities, to establish production plans, to treat the wretched potentates of yesterday according to their deserts. No kind of predestination impels us to become the offal of concentration camps—and as for the torturers of the prisons, we know very well how they are put against the wall! This experiment of ours will not be wasted. Millions of men who could not hear us are repeating it after us. There are whole armies in the concentration camps, there are whole peoples in the prisons and under the Terror. Yes, we have lost, but our spirit is strong, we are looking ahead eagerly.

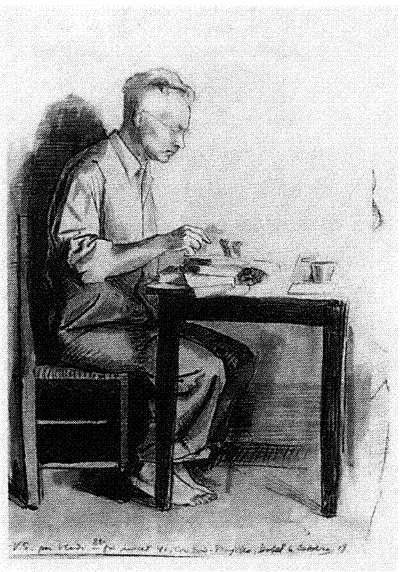


The *Paul-Lemerle*

In the western hemisphere, marvelous landscapes open to our eyes. The sun streams down upon every object. In front of the ship's bows little flying fish, the color of the sky, dart like dragonflies from the sea. The green mountains of Martinique are spread with dazzling riches. On the very edge of the sea, which has all the hues of the rainbow, the coconut trees are climbing high. And here we find yet one more concentration camp, scorching hot, without drinkable water, guarded by tall childlike Negroes, managed by thieves of policemen. Some of them, Vichy officials, are Nazi to the core. (Now for a lesson in the political economy of the West Indies. The island is owned by a few superlatively wealthy families of big rum distillers and sugar growers, who maintain a diluted form of slavery on it. We shall see how long that will last—perhaps for quite some time, since here there is the problem of peoples still in their infancy.)

We feel strangely free in Ciudad Trujillo, the small, spruce capital of the Dominican Republic. This is lit up unassumingly, and filled with flags, well-shaped girls of every conceivable Afro-European admixture, and Spanish refugees, comrades of ours, who make us won-

der how they manage to live so well. Suddenly, this heavy tropical sky reverberates loud and long with the thunder of a new war, this most evil, most decisive war that the Nazi Empire is now declaring against the Russian people. The blacks, deeply stirred, gather in crowds before the newspaper posters. Do they too, then, feel unconsciously that they are the citizens of an invisible International? I know the Russian system too well not to expect disastrous reverses. To think that all that has been built, at the cost of so many sacrifices and injustices, is going to perish under Nazi cannon fire . . . I have no doubt that, because of the massacre of the revolutionary generation (which constituted the Soviet Union's best-trained nucleus of skill), we are now going to face a horribly successful advance. For weeks I find it impossible to think of anything else but the nightmare sweeping over Russia. I can guess that, in these very days, the last of my comrades are being shot in Russian jails—because they were too discerning and because they might, before long, acquire too much influence. (Later I learnt that I had guessed right.) I carry on my work with practically no documentation, in the tropical heat, anxious for the fate of my wife back in France, whose painful battle for visas is not over. This is what I write:



Serge by Vlady, Ciudad Trujillo, 22 July, 1941

"Those of these men (the persecuted Oppositionists) who are still alive, if they could battle today for the Russian people, for the factories built by the Russian people with its own sweat and blood, for the old red flags of the Ural partisans and the Petrograd workers—these men, in chains for more than a decade, would do battle with their whole being. And he who is writing these lines, a man who has come out of the

same prisons, would be at their side. For today the salvation of the Russian people and its revolutionary achievements is indispensable to the salvation of the world."

I write that the weakness of Russia before industrial Germany (Russia still being, despite the immense achievements of industrialization, mainly an agricultural nation) would cost her untold sufferings, extending over years. However, "Russia spells an end to the effortless victories, an end to the unchallenged butcheries like Rotterdam—the butchers are now being paid back in kind, and the conquests with immediate booty are at an end. Real trouble is beginning: an end to the hope of peace in the near future, since nobody can really tell any longer when the fighting will end. There are so many factors tending to material and moral attrition . . . The Nazi Empire has been halted in its tracks."

I predict the stubborn, ever-renewed war of the partisans and the unconquerable Russian winters. I announce, in July 1941, that "Stalingrad, a vital strategic point, will be attacked and defended ferociously," and that Japan "will probably refrain from attacking Vladivostok "unless the Soviet power disintegrates altogether . . . but even in defeat we would judge it far closer to recovery than to anything that could really be called disintegration . . ."

Two years of war have not given the lie to this work (*Hitler Contra Stalin*) published in Mexico in September 1941; no publisher in New York would touch it. In the second part I ventured into the future and showed how infinitely probable was the "resurrection" of Russian democracy from its totalitarian noose. A people as great as this cannot die; still less can it survive such an ordeal without reviving into liberty, suppressing the terror at long last, and asking searching questions which will assign the political responsibility for the past.

My journey to Mexico continues, with a few incidents on the way. The articles I published in Ciudad Trujillo have excited the attention of the town's Communist cell, which is certainly connected with more powerful organizations in America. I am surrounded by a torrent of filthy denunciations—all over again. The Haitian police are horrified by our documents. Coming from Europe? From Vichy France? By way of Martinique? Refugees? Political? Stateless? Yet

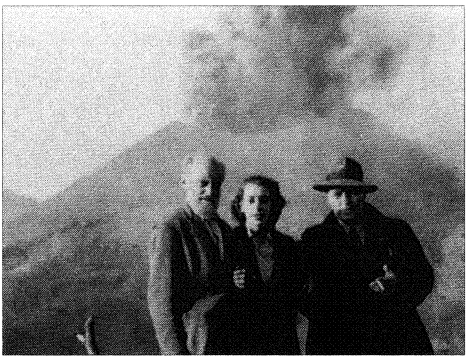
Russian? With a Mexican travel document? Yet a French author? With a pen name which is better known than your real name? One a writer and the other a painter? One takes notes and the other makes sketches? Although we had a valid Haitian visa, stamped the day before at the consulate, although all we wanted was permission to wait for the plane that was due tomorrow, although we had a personal letter for the son of the President (unfortunately absent), the police of Haiti go into a trance and take us into custody; if we had not greeted the affair with such equanimity we would have been beaten up there and then at the airport. They recover a little composure, only to smile nicely at a Falangist gentleman who is passing through with a pretty passport duly stamped by Franco's consuls. Back in the Dominican Republic, and again in Cuba, our luggage is searched and we are interrogated. But where there is nothing to find, the blackest slander loses its power. Everything is cleared up in a matter of days.

The loveliness of Havana, its sensual delight feeding on electricity—this after our pitifully dark European cities. Meetings with friends hitherto unseen. The heady sensation of being in a free country. We arrive in Havana while the battle of Leningrad is beginning, and we are haunted by mental pictures of the fighting over there.

The airplane instructs us in a new vision of the world whose lyrical richness could provide material for a renewed art form to flourish, whether in poetry or painting. But this semi-bankrupt civilization has made it into a killing machine; it is used for travel only by the rich, who are dead to any kind of enthusiasm. We see them dozing in the comfortable seats of the Douglas aircraft, and all the while we are winging over the Caribbean Sea, the storm-ridden lands of Yucatan, and then the tablelands of Mexico, covered in heavy clouds which are transfixed by shafts of light. Huge, rose-pink, and solid, Tenayuca's Pyramid of the Sun stands out suddenly on its flinty plain.

The first face I see at the airport in Mexico belongs to a Spanish friend; it is bespectacled, pensive, vigorous, and gaunt—Julián Gorkín. When he was in the jails of Spain we fought for eighteen months to save his life. Now he and other comrades, in New York and Mexico, have just fought over fourteen months to guarantee me this journey, this escape. Without them I should have been doomed, almost hopelessly.

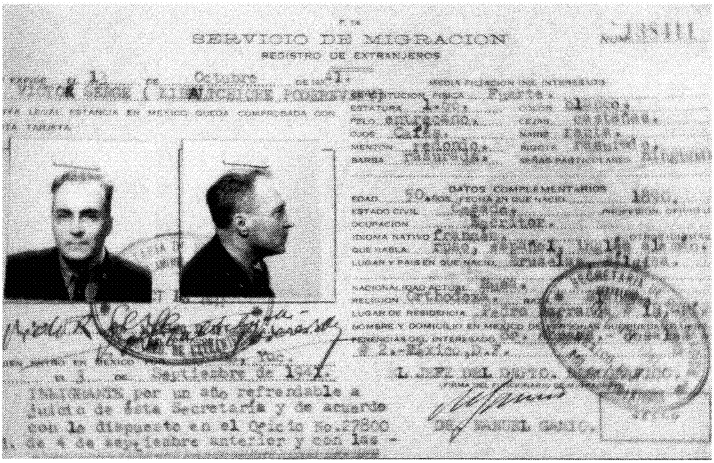
My destiny has its privileges: this is the second time in six years that this rational miracle of solidarity has been worked on my behalf. We stick together like this, from one end of the world to the other, few in number but sure of one another—and confident in the march of history.



Mexico, 1943: Serge and his wife Laurette in front of Paracutin volcano with the painter Dr. Atl

In the Mexican street, I taste a singular sensation. I am no longer an outlaw, no longer a hunted man, due any minute to be interned or to disappear. Only I am told now: "There are certain revolvers you must beware of..." That goes without saying. I have lived too long to live anywhere but in the immediate present. For me, the gracious lights of Mexico are superimposed over the prospect of distant cities, restless, devastated, and plunged into blackout, and in these I see men walking, the most hunted men in the world, whom I have left behind me. I know that not all of them have to leave, that those who can stay have a duty to stay (and, no doubt, they are performing this simple duty exceedingly well). I know that some of them have to be killed, statistics require it to be so. But there are some of them, too, who cannot stay without being killed and who by reason of their experience, their steadfastness, their idealism, their knowledge, are precious for tomorrow's Europe. If the men who were the backbone of the old European Socialism and the young murdered democracies are not saved, the inevitable revolutions to come will be led by ex-Nazis, ex-Fascists, ex-Communists of the totalitarian stamp, or adventurers devoid of

ideas or humanism, or men of goodwill who have lost their bearings. This is a simple and urgent political calculation. Why, then, do the Americas find it so hard to open a chink in their doorways to welcome in a few of these warriors?


SERVICIO DE MIGRACION
REGISTRO DE EXTRANJEROS
DATOS COMPLEMENTARIOS
EDAD 29 AÑOS, FECHA EN QUE NACIO
ESTADO CIVIL Casado
OCUPACION Agricultor
IDIOMA NATIVO Francés
QUE HABLA Ruso, Inglés
LUGAR Y PAIS EN QUE NACIO Bruselas
NACIONALIDAD ACTUAL Ruso
RELIGION Ortodoxa
LUGAR DE RESIDENCIA Xalapa
NOMBRE Y DOMICILIO EN MEXICO DE PERSONA A QUIEN VA DIRIGIDA
PROCEDENCIA DEL INTERESADO
Xalapa, Ver. a 3 de Septiembre de 1941.
EL JEFE DEL DEPTO.
DE MANUEL GARIC.
habitante por un año refrendable a
juicio de esta Secretaría y de acuerdo
con lo dispuesto en el Oficio No.27800
de 4 de septiembre anterior y con las

Serge's Mexican residence permit

10.
LOOKING FORWARD

I END THESE recollections on the threshold of Mexico.[1] Life goes on: the struggle goes on. I know that what I have written is at once too fragmentary and too concentrated; I had too many experiences to record. To my regret, for lack of space, I have had to omit many portrayals and many details, presenting only the characteristic and the essential. I have worked in rather poor conditions, appropriately so for a work of this kind: living with difficulty, surrounded by obscure threats, without knowing when or where the work could be published—but at the same time with the conviction that one day it would find its proper usefulness. Possibly, on some secondary points, I may be guilty of lapses of memory, but I have told only the truth, told it as completely as I can.

It has been observed that I show hardly any interest in talking about myself. It is hard for me to disentangle my own person from the social processes, the ideas and activities in which it has shared, which matter more than it does and which give it value. I do not think of myself as at all an individualist: rather as a "personalist," in that I view human personality as a supreme value, only integrated in society and in history. The experience and thought of one man have no significance that deserves to last, except in this sense. Nevertheless, no one should read into these words any yearning for self-effacement: I am sure that one must be oneself, simply and fully, neither abdicating responsibility nor wishing to diminish others. To sum up, nothing of us

1. A note on the manuscript, added later, as well as a 1946 letter to George Orwell, indicate that Serge planned to update the narrative and insert another chapter here before "Looking Forward."

is truly our own unless it be our sincere desire to share in the common life of mankind.

Out of a little over fifty years, I have spent ten in various forms of captivity, which have usually been harsh. These confinements have taught me the truth of Nietzsche's paradoxical dictum: "Whatever does not kill me, strengthens me." I have never had property, and practically never lived in security. Several times I have lost every material thing that I cherished: books, papers, and personal souvenirs. In Brussels, in Paris, in Barcelona, in Berlin, in Leningrad, at the Soviet frontier, in Paris again, I have left nearly everything behind—or it has all been taken away from me. This experience has made me indifferent to material goods, although it has done nothing to discourage me.

My inclinations have always been towards intellectual work. Few satisfactions seem to me as great as those of understanding and expression. Probably my books have been my dearest love, but I have written much less than I could have wished, and then hastily, without opportunity to revise, in the thick of the struggle. My books have undergone a singular fate. In my first fatherland, Russia, and only because I wished to serve my country without lying, every single one was suppressed even before publication, and the political police confiscated the manuscripts of several finished works, the fruit of several years' effort—among these the novel in which I thought I had best conveyed the grandeur of the Revolution. On the other hand, my history of the *Year One of the Russian Revolution*, published in Paris and Madrid, is one of the three or four honest and relatively complete works on an epoch whose documents have been destroyed, whose very memories have been falsified, whose witnesses have been shot. In France and Spain, my books have had a fine reception; in Spain they have been burned, in France I do not know what has become of them. In the United States, with only two exceptions, conservative publishers considered my work too revolutionary, and left-wing publishers too anti-totalitarian, that is, too hard on the Stalin regime. My latest novel, *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, written in my journeyings across the world, with the single passionate motive of giving life to human beings about whom practically nothing has been written up to now, has still not been able to appear, for this double reason. Although

their quality has generally been recognized, my books have known a life as hard as my own. I have found that the writer cannot even exist in our decomposing modern societies without accommodating himself to interests that forcibly limit his horizons and mutilate his sincerity.

I have outlived three generations of brave men, mistaken as they may have been, to whom I was deeply attached, and whose memory remains dear to me. And here again, I have discovered that it is nearly impossible to live a life devoted wholly to a cause which one believes to be just—a life, that is, where one refuses to separate thought from daily action. The young French and Belgian rebels of my twenties have all perished; my syndicalist comrades of Barcelona in 1917 were nearly all massacred; my comrades and friends of the Russian Revolution are probably all dead—any exceptions are only by a miracle. All were brave, all sought a principle of life more noble and more just than that of surrender to the bourgeois order, and except perhaps for certain young men, disillusioned and crushed before their consciousness had crystallized, all were engaged in movements for progress. I must confess that the feeling of having so many dead men at my back, many of them my betters in energy, talent, and historical character, has often overwhelmed me, and that this feeling has been for me the source of a certain courage, if that is the right word for it.

A political exile since my birth, I have known both the real benefits and the oppressive hardships of the uprooted man. Upheaval broadens his perception of the world and his knowledge of men; it blows away his foggy conformities and stifling particularisms; it saves him from that patriotic complacency which really is no more than humdrum self-satisfaction; but, in the struggle for existence, it remains a most serious handicap. I have witnessed the birth of the enormous category of "stateless persons," that is, of those men to whom tyrants refuse even a nationality. As far as the right to live is concerned, the plight of these men without a country (who are in truth those who are most attached to their own countries and to the country of mankind) can be compared only to that of the "unacknowledged man" of the Middle Ages who, since he had no lord or sovereign, had no rights and no protection either, and whose very name became a kind of insult.

Through their conservative temper, in a time when nothing can any longer be "conserved" without change, and also through legalistic inertia, most modern states have become accomplices in the persecution of these defenders of liberty. Now at last, when we, the stateless, are beginning to number millions, perhaps things will change. For my own part, I have no regrets at carrying this leaden burden, since I can feel myself to be at one and the same time Russian and French, European and Eurasian, a stranger to no land, despite the law, and recognizing everywhere, in all the diversity of place and person, the unity of the world and of mankind. Even in the earth of Mexico, so profoundly original in its volcanic aridity, I have seen the contours of Russia and Spain, and the Indio of this land reveals himself as brother to the toilers of Central Asia.

Early on, I learnt from the Russian intelligentsia that the only meaning of life lies in conscious participation in the making of history. The more I think of that, the more deeply true it seems to be. It follows that one must range oneself actively against everything that diminishes man, and involve oneself in all struggles which tend to liberate and enlarge him. This categorical imperative is in no way lessened by the fact that such an involvement is inevitably soiled by error: it is a worse error merely to live for oneself, caught within traditions which are soiled by inhumanity. This conviction has brought me, as it has brought others, to a somewhat unusual destiny, but we were, and still are, in line with the development of history, and it is now obvious that, during an entire epoch, millions of individual destinies will follow the paths along which we were the first to travel. In Europe, in Asia, in America, whole generations are in upheaval, are involved to the hilt in collective struggles, have become apprenticed to violence and grave danger, are enduring captivity in its various forms and proving to themselves that the egoism of "every man for himself" is finished, that private enrichment is no fit aim for life, that yesterday's conservatisms lead to nothing but catastrophe, and sensing the necessity for a fresh outlook tending towards the reorganization of the world.

I give myself credit for having seen clearly in a number of important situations. In itself, this is not so difficult to achieve, and yet it is

rather unusual. To my mind, it is less a question of an exalted or shrewd intelligence, than of good sense, goodwill, and a certain sort of courage to enable one to rise above both the pressures of one's environment and the natural inclination to close one's eyes to facts, a temptation that arises from our immediate interests and from the fear which problems inspire in us. A French essayist has said: "What is terrible when you seek the truth, is that you find it." You find it, and then you are no longer free to follow the biases of your personal circle, or to accept fashionable clichés. I immediately discerned within the Russian Revolution the seeds of such serious evils as intolerance and the drive towards the persecution of dissent. These evils originated in an absolute sense of possession of the truth, grafted upon doctrinal rigidity. What followed was contempt for the man who was different, of his arguments and way of life. Undoubtedly, one of the greatest problems which each of us has to solve in the realm of practice is that of accepting the necessity to maintain, in the midst of the intransigence which comes from steadfast beliefs, a critical spirit towards these same beliefs and a respect for the belief that differs. In the struggle, it is the problem of combining the greatest practical efficiency with respect for the man in the enemy—in a word, of war without hate. The Russian Revolution, although led by men who were upright and intelligent, did not resolve this problem because the masses had received, from the experience of despotism, a fatal stamp whose effects were imprinted in the leaders themselves. In making this judgment, I do not mean to disown the importance of economic-historical factors: they broadly condition action, but they do not determine its entire quality. There, the human factor intervenes.

Many times I have felt myself on the brink of a pessimistic conclusion as to the function of thinking, of intelligence, in society. Continuously, over a quarter of a century, that is since the stabilization of the Russian Revolution just before 1920, I have found a general tendency to the suppression of percipient thinking. Earlier than that, I was too young to arrive at a fair judgment of the situation in European society before the First World War, but I have the impression that the most daring thinking would have met with a warmer welcome at that period, and consequently found more opportunity to survive.

I do not, after all my reflection on the subject, cast any doubt upon the scientific spirit of Marxism, nor on its contribution, a blend of rationality and idealism, to the consciousness of our age. All the same, I cannot help considering as a positive disaster the fact that a Marxist orthodoxy should, in a great country in the throes of social transformation, have taken over the apparatus of power. Whatever may be the scientific value of a doctrine, from the moment that it becomes governmental, interests of State will cease to allow it the possibility of impartial inquiry; and its scientific certitude will even lead it first to intrude into education, and then, by the methods of guided thought, which is the same as suppressed thought, to exempt itself from criticism. The relationships between error and true understanding are in any case too abstruse for anyone to presume to regulate them by authority. Men have no choice but to make long detours through hypotheses, mistakes, and imaginative guesses, if they are to succeed in extricating assessments which are more exact, if partly provisional: for there are few cases of complete exactness. This means that freedom of thought seems to me, of all values, one of the most essential.

It is also one of the most contested. Everywhere and at every time, I have encountered fear of thought, repression of thought, an almost universal desire to escape or else stifle this ferment of restlessness. During the dictatorship of the proletariat, when Red posters proclaimed that "the reign of the workers will never end," no one would admit any doubt as to the eternity of a regime which was quite clearly exceptional, formed in the course of siege. Our great Marxists of Russia, nurtured on Science, would not admit any doubt concerning the dialectical conception of Nature—which is, however, no more than a hypothesis, and one difficult to sustain at that. The leadership of the Communist International classified as a moral lapse, or as a crime, the slightest doubt as to the triumphal future of their organization. Later, in the heart of the Opposition, with all the integrity of its ideals, Trotsky would not tolerate any point of view different from his own. I say nothing of other sorts of men, victims to waves of mob hysteria, to the blindness of private interest, or to the inertia of tradition. In 1918 I was nearly torn to pieces by my French workmates because I defended the Russian Revolution at the moment of the Brest-Litovsk

negotiations. Twenty years later, I was nearly torn to pieces by the same workers because I denounced the totalitarianism that had sprung from that Revolution.

I have seen the intellectuals of the Left, responsible for editing reputable reviews and journals, refuse to publish the truth. Even though it was absolutely certain, even though they did not contest it, they found it painful, they preferred to ignore it, it was in contradiction to their moral and material interests (the two generally go together). In politics I have observed the appalling powerlessness of accurate prediction, which brings boycott, slander, or persecution on him who predicts. The role of critical intelligence has seemed to me to be dangerous, and very nearly useless. That is the most pessimistic conclusion to which I have felt myself drawn. I am careful not to state it finally; I blame the feeling on my personal weakness, and I persist in regarding critical and percipient thought as an absolute necessity, as a categorical imperative which no one can evade without damage to himself and harm to society, and, besides, as the source of immense satisfactions. Better times will come, and perhaps soon. It is a matter of holding fast and keeping faith until then.

The participant and witness of our epoch's events must be driven to pronounce against historical fatality. It is evident that the broadest outlines of the historical process are the product of factors outside our grasp and control, which we can come to know only after an imperfect, fragmentary fashion. But it is no less evident that the character, and even in certain cases the direction, of historical facts depends to a very large extent on the caliber of individual human beings. When the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party met in December 1918 to study methods of attacking domestic counterrevolution, it had a conscious choice to make among the weapons it could present to the new regime. It could have instituted public revolutionary tribunals (allowing secret trial in certain specified cases) and, within these tribunals, permitted the right of defense, and ensured judicial strictness. It preferred to set up the Cheka, that is to say, an Inquisition with secret proceedings, and to exclude from this body any right of defense and any control by public opinion. In doing this, the Central Committee probably followed the line of least resistance; it also followed

psychological impulses which are comprehensible to any student of Russian history, but which have nothing in common with Socialist principles.

Was it possible, in the Russia of 1926 and 1927, to foresee the difficulties that would ensue from the combination of industrial backwardness with agrarian revival? We foresaw them, and it would have been possible to remedy them in time, to some degree. But once again, the men in power preferred to follow the line of least resistance, which is also the line of least foresight, but gives the illusion of putting off serious crisis as fearful invalids put off a surgical operation. The difficulties that had been deliberately ignored still kept growing, provoked a kind of panic or blockage of reason, and necessitated solutions that were not only violent, but hideously inhuman and burdensome, those of total collectivization and totalitarian industrialization. In *Destiny of a Revolution* (1937) I concluded: "The bureaucracy itself could, it seems, have a less disastrous policy without difficulty, if it had displayed more general culture and Socialist spirit. Its infatuation with administrative and military methods, joined to a penchant for panic in critical moments, reduced its real means. In despotic regimes, too many things depend on the tyrant [...] All that was done in the USSR would have been done much better by a Soviet democracy..."

The character of the tyrant consequently lends a catastrophic impetus to political conflicts. The trials of deception and blood were decided upon by the Politburo, which laid down the sentences and decreed their execution. This means that no more than ten individuals deliberated at leisure whether or not to massacre the thousands of citizens who were imbued with a spirit of opposition. They could have decided to deprive these adversaries of political rights or to imprison them. Instead, they resolved upon the use of the cruelest and most demoralizing means possible. In another situation, whose significance is incalculable, the same Politburo, faced with the choice of collaboration with Hitler and collaboration with the democratic powers—both solutions implying grave risks of war and invasion—adopted the solution which removed the most immediate danger by increasing the danger that would come in a few months or years, as has now been proved. In all this, the intelligence and character of men play a supreme

role, and the observation follows that their rational intelligence, and also their morality—as defined by human feeling and fidelity to principles representing general higher interests—must be at fault.

I take these examples only from facts—and from men whom I know well. Doubtless the same can be said of the most atrocious and tragic crime of our age: the extermination by the Nazis of the Jews of occupied Europe. Nothing at the present can measure the political, social, and psychological consequences of this crime. Even the idea of the human, acquired over thousands of years of civilization, has been put in question. Man's soul will be branded with the fact, and all that was sufficient for it was provided by a decree deliberated by a few individuals. The totalitarian machine, then, functions like a factory to which an engineer comes, turning a lever to make the current run.

It is necessary to conclude against the existence of fatality, and for the immense power of man and for personal responsibility. It is not a pessimistic conclusion. But it stands as a condemnation of systems which concentrate maddening power in a few hands, force a selection of perverted elements, destroy even an imperfect check upon power by the average man, and paralyze the public conscience.

The men of my generation—those born around 1890—above all the Europeans among them, cannot help the sensation of having lived on a frontier where one world ends and another begins. The passage from one century to another was a giddy one. I remember my astonishment as a child when I saw the first "horseless carriages" pass in the street. The motorcar was being born. I was a news vendor during the first aeroplane rally organized in France; that would be about 1909. Blériot's exploit of crossing the Channel by air provoked mass enthusiasm. I knew domestic lighting by paraffin, then by gas, since electricity still penetrated only into wealthy homes. I waited in the street for that magic character, the lamplighter, to pass . . . The illustrated journals of those distant times were full of the portraits of kings and emperors: the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Germany, the Emperor of Austro-Hungary, the Empress of China, the Sultan of the Sublime Porte . . . Across the screens of the first cinemas, regiments used to pa-

rade, rather too rapidly, with jerky steps, and these animated pictures dumbfounded us. There was even some talk of X-rays that allowed one to see right through the human body.

When I was fifteen I was much exercised by the discoveries in the field of energy. A popularizer, dealing with the splitting of the atom, wrote: "Nothing is created, everything is destroyed..." Anxiously, I questioned my father, a Spencerian positivist. He answered, smiling, "How do you imagine that could be true over infinite time? Everything would have disappeared billions of years ago!" I was reassured; Mach's book on energy became my bedside reading. The solid idea of matter was now overthrown; the First World War destroyed the idea of the stability of the world. The empires crumpled like houses of cards, the emperors were suddenly only poor devils on the run, who could even be shot. The banknote, that talisman, became no more than a scrap of paper—and we were all millionaires, except that a million would not buy a box of matches. Relativity taught a new—and perplexing—concept of time and space.

I have seen the face of Europe change several times. Before the First World War I knew a buoyant Europe, optimistic, liberal, and crudely dominated by money. We reached our twenties as young idealistic workers, and we were angry and desperate, at times, because of the Wall: we could see nothing beyond an eternal bourgeois world, unjust and self-satisfied.

The guns thundered, and Europe was at war, a prey to contending hysterias, bleeding from all her veins, and yet, in the middle of the slaughter, pretty comfortably off. Behind the lines business was good, the world was still solid! Paris, ominous at night, but almost gay in the daytime; Barcelona, full of birds, dancing girls, and anarchos, the trains packed with tough, worn-out soldiers...without knowing it, the world was sliding towards the maelstrom.

Suddenly the Europe of revolutions was born at Petrograd. Our Red soldiers chased the generals' bands across all Europe and all Siberia. Insurrections and summary executions followed in Central Europe. Among the victorious powers, there reigned the calm, stupid self-assurance of folk getting back to their profitable affairs. "It will all quieten down, just wait and see!" Businesses, chancelleries, governments,

newspapers, the League of Nations, all were stocked in plenty with competent gentlemen whose bodily nourishment was excellent, and spiritual diet less so, only it was bad taste to talk about that. Postwar "good time," peace of the victors... We saw the cracks in the earth open wide, and when we spoke of it, they called us visionaries.

Meanwhile, totalitarian Europe was growing behind our backs. As to that, we were blind. We revolutionaries, who aimed to create a new society, "the broadest democracy of the workers," had unwittingly, with our own hands, constructed the most terrifying State machine conceivable, and when, with revulsion, we realized the truth, this machine, driven by our friends and comrades, turned on us and crushed us. Maturing into merciless despotism, the Russian Revolution no longer summoned the German masses to give the utmost of their resources and strength. Nazism came to power, aping the Marxism it loathed. Europe multiplied concentration camps, burned or pulped books, laid reason under the steamroller, and scattered abroad, over all its loudspeakers, intoxicating lies.

There followed a dream of confused hopes: the Europe of the Popular Fronts and Moscow Trials seemed convalescent in those very moments when it was doomed. It became increasingly difficult to distinguish between revolution and reaction, between democracy with Fascist trends and Fascism in disguise, between submerged civil war and the rule of democracy, between open civil war and war between States, between intervention and nonintervention, between brands of totalitarianism in opposition but momentarily allied, between the most criminal impostures and the simple truth. This confusion sprang from the impotence of men caught up in the drift towards the cataclysm, and impotence fed in its turn upon confusion.

The era of huge collapses followed. It seemed that no human value could survive—only gigantic war machines whose function was to establish slavery.

Here we are, with the nightmare of the war behind us, but without peace having been made, without a feeling of man's deliverance, without even a vague reawakening of the great hopes that signaled the end of the First World War. We feel trapped between the aggressive, crushing power of a totalitarianism born of a victorious Socialist rev-

olution and the routines of an old society committed, in spite of itself, to changes which it refuses to recognize. On both sides, primitive man, barbaric and narrow-minded, greedy and mendacious, is working against better man.

Since I escaped from Europe, other changes have come about. The prestige and effectiveness of the totalitarian powers have declined. Even their victories seem to foreshadow their future defeat. The horizon begins to clear; the balance sheet is being drawn up. It shows that thirty years ago, with scientific discoveries that added prodigiously to man's technological power (without proportionately improving his level of consciousness), we entered into a cycle of world transformation. We entered it as captives of social systems outworn to the point of being unlivable. The best and most clear-sighted of the militants of my generation, themselves formed by a defunct world, have often been revealed, in the tempests of the age, as more than half-blind. No doctrine has stood before the shock. There is nothing surprising about that: such are the limitations of man and of doctrine. Nonetheless, this is not a vicious circle. The broad outlines of events now in the course of realization are becoming visible out of the chaos. It is no longer the revolutionaries who are making the immense world revolution; it is the senseless tyrannies that have set it off by committing suicide. It is the industrial and scientific technology of the modern world that is breaking brutally with the past and throwing the peoples of entire continents into the necessity for starting life afresh on new foundations. That these foundations must be of social justice, of rational organization, of respect for the individual, of liberty, is for me an obvious fact which, little by little, is asserting itself out of the very inhumanity of the present time. The future seems to me, despite the clouds on the horizon, to be full of possibilities vaster than any we have glimpsed in the past. The passion, the experience, and even the errors of my fighting generation may perhaps help illumine the way forward, but on one condition, which has become a categorical imperative: never to give up the defense of man against systems whose plans crush the individual.

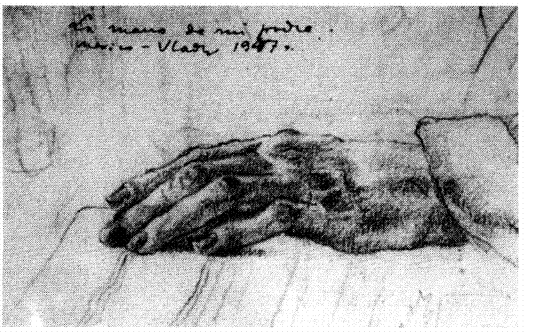
Mexico, 1942–February, 1943

EPILOGUE

The Death of Serge

ONE DAY in November 1947 my father brought a poem to my house in Mexico City. Not finding me at home, he left to take a walk downtown. From the Central Post Office, he mailed me the poem. A short while later, he died in a taxi. That night a friend came to bring me the news. I found him on an operating table in the police station. A yellowish lamp illuminated the sinister room. The first thing I noticed were his shoes: they had holes in them. This shocked me, for he was careful about his dress, although his clothes were always of the cheapest. The following day, I was unable to draw his face, for they had put a plaster death mask over it. I limited myself to drawing his hands, which were beautiful. A few days later I received his poem: "Hands."

VLADIMIR SERGE
Mexico, February 1989



La mano de mi padre, Mexico, Vlady, 1947

GLOSSARY

RATHER than peppering Serge's text with notes, we have provided this glossary as an easy reference to help the modern reader cope with the unfamiliar names of hundreds of the largely forgotten French and Russian revolutionaries whom Serge wrote these *Memoirs* to memorialize. In preparing these entries, I have relied in part on earlier footnotes by Peter Sedgwick, George Paizis, and Jean Rière, the editor of the French edition of Serge's *Memoires* (Laffont), for which I offer many thanks. Thanks, too, to the Russian translator of Serge's *Memoirs*, Julia Guseva of the Victor Serge Library in Moscow, who was kind enough to review. I bear responsibility for the rest of the entries (particularly concerning Serge's family) and of course for all of the errors.—R. G.

Abramovich, Rafail (1880–1963): Russian Socialist. Member of Jewish labor Bund and then a MENSHEVIK Internationalist in WWI; after leaving Russia becomes a leading figure in the SECOND INTERNATIONAL and editor of the émigré journal *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik*.

Adler, Friedrich (Fritz) (1879–1960): Austro-Marxist, medical doctor, and philosopher; son of Victor Adler, the founder of the Austrian Socialist Party. Sentenced to death in 1916 for assassinating Stürgkh, the head of government, in protest against the war. Amnestied on Nov. 11, 1918, Adler is immediately elected president of the revolutionary Workers and Soldiers Council. In 1921 becomes general secretary of the Vienna Socialist International and later of the SECOND INTERNATIONAL.

Almereyda, Miguel (Bonaventure Vigo) (1883–1917): Flamboyant revolutionary militant and writer; organized the Jeunesses Révolutionnaires in 1908, then founded the political-satirical review *Le Bonnet Rouge*, which led a "defeatist" campaign (1916–17) until it was suppressed; Almereyda was then accused of receiving German funds and arrested. Died in prison under mysterious circumstances. (Father of filmmaker Jean Vigo.)

Alter, Victor (1890–1941): Polish Socialist, leader of the Jewish labor Bund; refugee from Hitler in the USSR in 1939; executed by Stalin, along with ERLICH, in 1941. The news was not published until 1943. A memorial/protest meeting organized in Mexico by Serge and his comrades was attacked by Stalinists.

Andrade, Juan (1898–1981): Born in Madrid, joins Socialist Youth; co-founder of the Spanish CP in 1921 and editor of its journal, *La Antorcha*. Writer and publisher. Active in NIN's anti-Stalinist Communist Left and later co-leader of POUM. Arrested by Stalinist militia in 1937 and tried as "Trotsky Fascist." Defended by Serge. Survives prison and Vichy concentration camps and prisons. Liberated by POUM commando led by Wilebaldo Solano in July 1944.

Armand, Émile (1872–1962): After being influenced by anarchism during his period in the Salvation Army, founded a Christian-Tolstoyan-anarchist journal (*L'Ere Nouvelle*), then turned to individualist anarchism and edited *L'Anarchie* and subsequently *L'En-dehors*, in which Serge managed to publish several articles that were smuggled out of the penitentiary during WWI. Serge's 1917 letters to Armand from Barcelona reveal his political state of mind after five years in a French prison.

Arquer, Jordi (1906–1981): Native of Catalonia; co-founder of Spanish CP; joins MAURÍN's anti-Stalinist Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, then POUM. Leader of employees' union and important strikes in Barcelona. Co-organizer and commander in the POUM division on the Huesca front in Civil War in 1936. Arrested by Stalinist militia in 1937 and tried as "Trotsky Fascist." Defended by Serge's committee. Survives and emigrates to Mexico.

Artzybashev, Mikhail Petrovich (1878–1927): Russian novelist of anarchist-individualist sympathies; his *Sanine* (1907), with its scandalous depiction of sex, and *A l'extrême limite* were translated into French by Serge and published in Paris in 1911 and 1913 under the name of the publisher, J. Povolovsky.

Ascaso, Francisco (1901–1936): Outstanding figure of the Spanish anarchist and syndicalist movement (CNT-AIT), whose destiny was linked with DURRUTI in daring raids and assassination attempts; imprisonment, Argentinean exile, and heroic death on the Civil War battlefield.

Bakayev, Ivan (1887–1936): BOLSHEVIK, worker; chairman of the Petrograd CHEKA in 1919, goes on to fill a similar post in southeast Russia. Later a prominent member of the ZINOVIEV opposition; sentenced to death and shot after the 1936 Moscow Trial of the 16.

Bakunin, Mikhail Alexandrovich (1814–1876): Russian anarchist theoretician and international revolutionary agitator. Junior officer in Imperial Guard; "Young Hegelian" student in Berlin and Paris; participates in 1848 European revolutions; imprisoned in St. Petersburg's Peter-Paul Fortress (1849–1857); exiled to Siberia; escapes via Japan and the US to London (1861); edits *Bell* with Alexander Herzen; agitates in Switzerland, Italy, France (Lyon insurrection of 1870). Joins FIRST INTERNATIONAL (IWA) in 1868; conspires to wrest IWA leadership from "authoritarian" Marx; expelled, founds his own "libertarian" IWA in 1872. Proclaims "destruction is also a creative act." Powerful influence on Russian nihilist youth. Involved with murderous conspirator Sergey NECHAYEV. Serge's articles on translation of Bakunin's "Confession" to the Tsar, found in a Russian archive, were criticized by the anarchists in 1920–22.

Balabanova, Angelica (1877–1965): Russian Socialist and internationalist of Ukrainian Jewish origin. Studies in Brussels; labor organizer and Socialist activist in Italy; writes for *Avanti!* In *My Life as a Rebel*, a memoir in the same mold as Serge's, she famously describes her pre-WWI encounters with Mussolini when the future dictator was a young, insecure Socialist journalist. Co-founder and secretary of the international Zimmerwald antiwar group in 1915, which includes LENIN; BOLSHEVIK in 1917; returns to Russia in 1919; on Executive of early Communist International; dismayed by lack of freedom, leaves USSR with Lenin's permission in 1922; active Socialist and anti-Fascist in Italy, then Switzerland. After WWII, corresponds with Serge, helps found the pro-Western Italian Democratic Socialist Party led by Giuseppe Saragat.

Baron, Aaron (1891–1938): Russian anarchist; husband of FANYA BARON. Spared being executed with her in 1921, spends 18 years in prison, shot in 1938.

Baron, Fanya (Fanny) (?–1921): Russian anarchist. Sojourns in America; with AARON BARON joins Nabat (Alarm) Ukrainian anarchist federation and works with Makhnovist movement. Arrested, probably in late 1920 with her husband and VOLINE; escapes from Ryazan Prison; betrayed, rearrested, shot by CHEKA in Sept. 1921.

Bauer, Otto (1881–1938): Influential Austro-Marxist thinker and leader of the left wing of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party; Foreign Minister (1918–19); forced into exile after failed Social-Democratic uprising in 1934, dies in Paris.

Bebel, August (1840–1913): Socialist worker, parliamentarian, writer

(*Woman in the Past, Present and Future*; *Woman Under Socialism*); co-founder (with William Liebknecht) and leader of the German Social-Democratic Party (1869). Imprisoned two years for opposing the 1870 Franco-Prussian War and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Released and reelected. Founder SECOND INTERNATIONAL in 1889.

Bely, Andrei (1880–1934): Revered Russian Symbolist poet best known in English for his modernist novel *St. Petersburg* (1916–22), which probably influenced Serge's own Petersburg novel, *Conquered City*. Serge translated his poem "Christ Is Risen." Like BLOK, greets Revolution with utopian enthusiasm; in 1920 founds Volfila (free philosophical society) with Ivanov-Razumnik, but soon comes under CHEKA surveillance. Allowed by LENIN to leave for Berlin in 1921, Bely later returns and remains in the USSR.

Benjamin, Walter (1892–1940): German literary theorist and critic strongly influenced by Marxism; anti-Nazi refugee in Paris. He then fled occupied France, intending to emigrate to the US, but his transit visas were cancelled by the Franco government while he was in Spain. He committed suicide in Portbou, Spain.

Berkman, Alexander (1870–1936): Russian American anarchist. Born in Vilnius (Lithuania, Russian Empire), emigrates to New York at age 18; lover and collaborator of GOLDMAN; attempts to assassinate Pittsburgh capitalist Henry Clay Frick during bitter Homestead strike of 1892 and serves 14 years in prison (*Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*). Arrested with Goldman in 1917 for opposing the draft and deported to Soviet Russia, which he tours in 1920 with Goldman. During 1921 Kronstadt crisis, he and Goldman attempt conciliation (with Serge's father-in-law RUSSAKOV and with Serge as rapporteur) between the BOLSHEVIKS and the rebel sailors. Disillusioned with Communism (*The Bolshevik Myth*, 1925) he settles in France; ill and discouraged, he commits suicide just before the outbreak of the Spanish Revolution, which revived anarchist perspectives.

Bertoni, Luigi (1872–1947): Swiss printer and publisher of anarchist literature: first, of the bilingual journal *Le Réveil* (*Il Risveglio*) from 1900–40, then of various pamphlets; in opposition to both World Wars. Publisher of KROPOTKIN, Malatesta, and other anarchist writers.

Blok, Alexander (1880–1921): Russian poet greatly admired by Serge. Like his fellow Symbolist BELY, Blok initially greets Revolution with utopian enthusiasm; Serge translated into French his poem "The Twelve" likening twelve Red Guards marching through a blizzard to Christ's

twelve disciples. Ill and disillusioned by 1921, Blok petitions for permission to leave Russia but dies before it is granted.

Blücher, Vasily Konstantinovich (1889–1938): Highly decorated Soviet Russian commander (marshal in 1935) executed during Stalin's purge of the Red Army. Worker of peasant origin, NCO in 1914 war, Blücher joins the Socialists and takes part in the 1917 Revolution in Samara. An outstanding BOLSHEVIK leader in the Civil War, with legendary victories against the Czech Legion in 1918 and General Wrangel of the White Army in 1920. Appointed Far East military commander in 1921, he becomes Soviet military adviser to Chinese Nationalist HQ under the name of Galin during Stalin's tragic flirtation with Chiang Kai-shek (1924–27); depicted in Malraux's *Man's Fate*. Escapes Chiang's anti-Red extermination campaign; appointed commander of Soviet Far East in 1929, victorious in clashes with Chinese warlords and later with Japan. Too popular and powerful for Stalin, he is arrested and tortured in 1938, but refuses to "confess" to spying for the Japanese.

Body, Marcel (1894–1984): French Communist (later anarchist) militant. As a young typographer in Limoges, Body becomes a Socialist and learns Russian out of love of Tolstoy. Mobilized in 1916, he is incorporated into the French military mission in Russia where, like PASCAL and SADOUL, he witnesses the Russian Revolution, refuses orders to fight against it, joins the French Communist Group in Moscow, and works along with Serge as a translator in the early COMINTERN. Organizes an ephemeral French rural commune near Lake Ladoga in 1921. Longtime close relationship with KOLLONTAI. Returns to France (1927), expelled from French CP in 1928; collaborates with SOUVARINE. Translates complete works of BAKUNIN into French.

Boë, Jean de ("the Printer") (1889–1974): Belgian printer and trade union leader; leading light of teenage Brussels Revolutionary Group with Serge and CALLEMIN in 1906; wrongfully convicted in 1913 trial of BONNOT GANG. Survives deportation to Devil's Island. Rises to leadership of Belgian printers; reunited with Serge in Belgium in 1936.

Bogdanov, Alexander Alexandrovich (1873–1928): Philosopher, early BOLSHEVIK, and onetime LENIN rival. Of Belorussian origin, studies science and medicine; his techtology anticipated cybernetics and systems theory. Author of utopian science fiction (his *Red Star* inspired Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars*) and a three-volume treatise entitled *Empiriomonizm*, which LENIN famously attacked in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*. Expelled by Lenin in 1909, joins GORKY and LU-

NACHARSKY in founding a workers' school at Capri. Returns to Russia after revolution, founds the Proletcult movement, to which Serge was somewhat sympathetic, promoting literary creativity among the masses. Dies experimenting with rejuvenation via blood transfusion.

Bolsheviks: Revolutionary Marxist Party of LENIN during the Russian Revolution. Officially the majority (*bolshinstvo*) faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), which split at its Second Congress in 1903, leaving Martov's moderate MENSHEVIK faction in the minority (*menshinstvo*). Lenin's Party changes name to "Communist" in 1918, hence the distinction between Old Bolsheviks (who joined before the Revolution) and Civil War Communists like Serge (who joined in 1919).

Bonnot, Jules (1876–1912): Illegalist anarchist auto mechanic from Lyon; practices individual reappropriation, counterfeiting, etc. (Nicknamed "the Bourgeois" for his conventional dress and ambitions.) Arrives in Paris in 1911 as fugitive after accidental (?) shooting of an Italian comrade while ferrying a stolen car. His cause adopted by CALLEMIN and his young (mostly Belgian) anarcho-individualist comrades; they embark with him on bloody series of bank robberies and crimes. Cornered alone, Bonnot defends himself furiously, first killing Police Commissar Juin and later, in another hideout, holding off a regiment with his pistols before succumbing (perhaps by suicide) to a dynamite-led charge.

Bonnot Gang: Self-proclaimed anarchists who embarked in Dec. 1911 on a bloody series of bank robberies and other crimes using stolen automobiles to get away—an astounding innovation when policemen were on foot or bicycle. Able to hide, thanks to the sympathies and traditional hospitality of other anarchists, they held off regiments of police, terrorized Paris, and grabbed headlines for half a year. Named the "Bonnot Gang" by journalists, the group is better described as the "Brussels Gang." The core of its membership goes back to Serge's teenage Brussels Revolutionary Group of around 1906, including founder BOË, VICTOR KIBALCHICH, CALLEMIN, and Edouard Carouy, later joined by three refugee French anarchist draft resisters—VALET, Élie Monier, and (later) GARNIER—all of whom were either killed in gun battles, guillotined, or sent to prison after the 1913 trial. The Belgian group broke up under police pressure in 1909 but loosely reassembled in Paris by 1911, around the anarcho-individualist journal *L'Anarchie*, just as the Brussels boys were turning 21. By then all (except Serge) were committed to the illegalist theory (and practice) of individual expropriation

(stealing) and were more or less desperate. The arrival of the equally desperate mechanic and auto thief BONNOT, who was 15 years older, provided the catalyst to this explosive mixture. If anyone was the brain behind the Brussels boys' tragically inept rampage, it was Callemin. The cult of the Bonnot Gang in France has inspired the publication of scores of books and films (one starring Jacques Brel), TV docudramas, and anarchist comic books. Unfortunately, most of these books are based on earlier books, themselves based on contemporary newspaper stories, which in turn were based on police handouts and sensationalized by journalists. The only credible, documented account is Richard Parry's well-written *The Bonnot Gang* (London: Rebel Press, 1987).

Bordiga, Amadeo (1889–1970): Founder and outstanding early leader of Italian Communism, took a far-left position in the COMINTERN and was displaced by GRAMSCI and the more pliant Togliatti; later leader of sectarian far-left International Communist Party.

Breitscheid, Rudolf (1874–1944): Minister of the Interior in the German Republic (1918–19), then a leading Social-Democratic deputy.

Brupbacher, Fritz (1874–1945): Swiss physician and Socialist for more than 40 years; expelled from the Socialist Party in 1914 for his revolutionary internationalism and from the CP in 1933 for his anti-Stalinism, which was of a semi-anarchist rather than a Trotskyist variety. Friend and supporter of Serge.

Bukharin, Nikolai Ivanovich (1888–1938): Russian revolutionary writer, economist, philosopher, leader of BOLSHEVIKS in Moscow during 1917 Revolution, later editor of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, secretary of the COMINTERN Executive. Co-author (with PREOBRAZHENSKY) of *The ABC of Communism* and *Economics of the Transition Period*. Youthful, idealistic, considered "the darling of the Party" and the favorite of LENIN. After Lenin's death joins with Stalin, for whom he invents the theory of "socialism in a single country" in order to defeat and expel the internationalist Left Opposition of TROTSKY (1927). In 1928, Stalin turns against Bukharin and the Communist Right, who favor the continuation of the moderate NEW ECONOMIC POLICY, oppose the mad pace of Stalinist industrialization, and defend the peasantry against forced collectivization. Defeated in 1929, recants, and is pardoned in 1930. Author of Soviet Constitution; arrested in 1937, interrogated for a year under harsh conditions at the notorious NKVD Lubyanka prison; star of Third Moscow Trial (1938), Bukharin defiantly speaks Aesopian language while "confessing" to absurd charges and is shot.

Permitted to write during his imprisonment, he completes four manuscripts (including poetry and a memoir) under Stalin's eye; in 1992 these are excavated from the sacrosanct presidential archives by Bukharin's family and his biographer Stephen Cohen.

Cachin, Marcel (1869–1958): French Communist leader, deputy, later senator, editor of *L'Humanité* (1923–58). Joins Socialists in 1891; elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1914, supports WWI, sent to Russia in 1917. In 1920 Tours Socialist Congress, supports joining COMINTERN; loyal Stalinist, pillar of Popular Front against Fascism (1935) then of collaboration with Germany under Stalin-Hitler pact (1939–41).

Caillaux, Joseph (1863–1941): Radical Socialist deputy and minister; arrested in Dec. 1917 by CLEMENCEAU and found guilty in Feb. 1920 of "correspondence with the enemy." Sentenced to three years' imprisonment; after his release reentered politics and became Finance Minister (1925–26) and a senator.

Callemin, Raymond ("la Science") (1889?–1913): Serge's boyhood friend and codefendant in the 1913 trial. Baby-faced, "four-eyed" 21-year-old Raymond is the apparent brain of the notorious BONNOT GANG; after months as a fugitive, he falls in love and is quickly betrayed to the police by his first mistress. At the trial, he mocks the judges but pleads innocent. His testimony in favor of the innocent DIEUDONNÉ comes too late. On death row he remains calm, studies and practices calisthenics, walks stoically to the guillotine, and mocks the gawking journalists.

Camelots du Roi: Nickname given to the young right-wing toughs who sold the Catholic royalist publication *Action Française*.

Caserio, Sante Geronimo (1873–1894): Young Italian anarchist, stabbed French president Carnot to death for failing to grant clemency to VAILLANT in June 1894.

CGT (Confédération générale du Travail): Principal French labor federation. Founded in 1895, the CGT has gone through several transformations. From around 1905, under the leadership of Émile POUGET, it is strongly influenced by revolutionary syndicalism, like the contemporary American IWW and Spanish CNT, but in 1914, under the leadership of Léon Jouhaux, the majority turns patriotic and supports the French War effort. After WWI, the CGT is in general sympathetic to the 1917 Russian Revolution and involved in major strikes, but the movement splits in 1920 between the CGTU, which supports LENIN's "21 Conditions" and joins the Moscow International of Red Trade Unions, and the CGT. The two factions reunited in 1936, at the time of

the Popular Front and big sit-down strikes, but in 1939 the Communists were expelled after the Stalin-Hitler pact. Outlawed under the Occupation and Vichy governments, the CGT became associated with the Resistance and increasingly dominated by the Communist Party. The pro-Communist CGT continued to dominate French labor in the postwar period, despite the creation of the rival Force Ouvrière (under CIA influence) and its moderating influence during the 1968 student-worker uprising.

Chapayev, Vassily Ivanovich (1887–1919): Legendary Red commander in the Civil War. Fought against the Czechoslovak Legion and Admiral Kolchak's troops.

Chapelier, Émile (1870–1933): Belgian anarchist, former coal miner, and brawler, converted to education and mutual aid. After a spell in prison, organizes anarchist colony L'Expérience (the Experiment) first at Stokel then Boisfort; publishes *Le révolté* (1908) with participation of Serge, CALLEMIN, BOË. "His shadow lingers on," wrote Serge, "greater than the man himself."

Cheka: Acronym for Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution, Speculation, and Sabotage, established by LENIN in Dec. 1917 and soon institutionalized. Evolves into state secret police as GPU, NKVD, and MGB, putting down civil disorders, policing the vast Gulag, and directing networks abroad. Serge ultimately considered it the BOLSHEVIKS' worst mistake. *Conquered City*, Serge's early tragic novel of the Russian Civil War, describes a moral crisis within the early Cheka. His last novel, *Unforgiving Years*, describes the tragic dilemma of loyal, idealistic Russian agents during WWII.

Clemenceau, Georges (1841–1929): French Radical Republican, staunch patriot, head of government 1906–09 and 1917–20. Paris municipal councillor from 18th arrondissement (Montmartre), rejects French capitulation to Prussia, helps found Third Republic in 1870, attempts to conciliate revolutionary Paris Commune in 1871, and later fights for amnesty of defeated Communards. Defends Captain Dreyfus, founds League for the Rights of Man, anticlerical. Interior Minister in 1906 nicknamed "the Tiger" for ferocious repression of workers' strikes. Recalled to power in 1917, uses harsh methods to lead France to victory and dictate peace at Versailles Conference.

CNT-FAI (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo-Federación anarquista ibérica): The CNT, founded in Barcelona in 1910, was a revolutionary Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union, similar to the IWW which, although

illegal through most of its history, developed into a mass movement in the '20s and '30s. The FAI, with which it is closely associated, was organized by anarchists in 1927 as a revolutionary counterweight to moderate tendencies in the CNT. During the Asturias General Strike in 1934 and the Civil War of 1936–39, CNT-FAI workers and peasants carried out the CNT program, collectivizing the land and means of production (particularly in Barcelona), abolishing class relations, and developing Communistic societies in several regions. At the same time, many CNT leaders ignored revolutionary anarchist anti-State, anti-parliamentarist principles and participated as Ministers in bourgeois governments along with the Stalinists, who, controlling internal security, arrested anarchists and POUM-ists and forcibly crushed the anarchist-inspired collectivist experiments, restoring private property.

Coblenz: The base of the Royalist émigrés during the French Revolution.

Collinet, Michel (1904–1977): French militant. Member of Communist Youth (1925–28) and later of Trotskyist groups; active in Socialist Party from 1935; co-founder with PIVERT of the Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party; active in WWII Resistance, especially in journalism; author of a number of important works of sociology and social history from a Marxist-revisionist standpoint.

Comintern (Third International): See **Internationals: I–IV**.

Constituent Assembly: Elected in Nov. 1917 during the Russian Revolution, the idea of a Constituent Assembly was a basic democratic goal (borrowed from history of French Revolution) supported by all anti-Tsarist parties from liberals to BOLSHEVIKS. Convened in Jan. 1918, a majority led by the Right SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY Chernov refuses to recognize Soviet power, provoking walkout of Left Social-Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks. Dispersed by the Bolsheviks on the grounds that the elected Soviets, now in power, were more democratic than the Constituent and that the Nov. 1917 election, which took place before the Left-Right split among the majority Social-Revolutionaries, was unrepresentative.

Crispien, Arthur (1875–1946): German Socialist leader; along with DITTMANN opposed the "21 Conditions" laid down by LENIN for affiliation to the Communist International, and broke with it after the Second World Congress of 1920.

Dan, Theodore (1871–1947): Right MENSHEVIK; during WWI a moderate internationalist; emigrated in 1922; published a review of rather pro-Soviet inclinations in New York, where he died.

Dantec, Félix le (1869–1917): Lamarckian biologist, theorist of evolution and rationalist; influence on "scientific" anarchism of CALLEMIN.

Daudet, Léon (1868–1942): French novelist and anti-Semitic writer. Son of storyteller Alphonse Daudet; co-founder (with Charles Maurras) of the monarchist and extreme-right Action Française.

Däumig, Ernst (1866–1922): Experienced German shock trooper and underground worker; led the Revolutionary Shop Stewards movement in 1918, supported and joined the Communist International, but sided with LEVI after the latter's expulsion from the COMINTERN in 1921.

Dieudonné, Eugène (1884–1944): French anarcho-individualist. Arrested as member of the BONNOT GANG and sentenced to life in the Penal Colony, despite the deathbed note by BONNOT declaring his innocence (and the declaration of CALLEMIN after the verdict). Escapes from Cayenne, recaptured, ultimately pardoned thanks to a campaign by the journalist Albert LONDRES.

Dimitrijević, Dragutin (1876–1917): Sarajevo assassination plotter. Chief of Serbian intelligence and a leading figure in the secret society called the Black Hand; executed after a highly suspect trial in June 1917.

Dittmann, Wilhelm (1874–1954): German Socialist leader; along with CRISPIEN opposed the "21 Conditions" for affiliation to the Communist International, and broke with it after the Second World Congress of 1920.

Doriot, Jacques (1898–1945): French Communist, later Fascist politician. Metalworker, Young Socialist, decorated veteran, heads French CP Youth; visits the USSR; elected deputy with strong following in the working-class Paris suburb of St. Denis; opposes the "Social-Fascist" line of the COMINTERN and breaks with the French CP in 1934, advocating a Popular Front with Socialists and bourgeois liberals. After being unseated in St. Denis, founds the Parti Populaire Français, which speedily becomes a blatantly Fascist organization. During the occupation a virulent French Nazi; fights on the Russian front; killed by an Allied plane while traveling in a car.

Duhamel, Georges (1884–1966): French physician, essayist, novelist (the Pasquier Chronicles sequence), memorialist; supports the "free Serge" campaign in 1933–36; friend after 1936.

Durruti, Buonaventura (1896–1936): Outstanding figure of the Spanish anarchist and syndicalist movement (CNT-AIT); his destinies were linked with ASCASO in daring raids and assassination attempts; imprisonment, Argentinean exile, and heroic death on the Civil War battlefield.

Dzerzhinsky, Felix (1877–1926): BOLSHEVIK revolutionary of Polish origin; founder and head of the CHEKA. Early membership in Polish Social-Democratic movement, close to LUXEMBURG; frequently imprisoned; elected to Central Committee of Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party in 1906, close to LENIN; liberated from jail by February Revolution; participates actively in October Revolution. Lenin grants him full powers to combat sabotage and internal counterrevolution after assassination attempts by SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARIES on Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders. Unleashes Red Terror, arresting opposition, outlawing political parties, closing most newspapers. Considered brilliant and incorruptible. Leader in Party, sympathizes first with TROTSKY, then with Stalin after 1921 Georgian conflict. Drops dead after stormy Central Committee meeting.

Ehrenburg, Ilya (1890–1967): Cosmopolitan Soviet Russian Jewish novelist (*The Fall of Paris*), journalist, and WWII propagandist. Participates in 1905 Russian Revolution; long stays abroad in Paris; maintains relative independence while submissive to Stalin. Helps hush up "Serge affair" at 1935 Paris Congress for Defense of Culture; reports on Spanish Civil War; survives Purges. Contributes, with Vassily Grossman, in assembling the *Black Book* of Nazi crimes against the Jews, which was suppressed by Stalin in 1948 and first printed in Jerusalem in 1980.

Erlich, Hendryk (1882–1941): Jewish Polish Socialist leader; refugee from Hitler to the USSR in 1939; executed by Stalin, along with his colleague ALTER, in 1941. The news was finally published in 1943. A memorial/protest meeting organized in Mexico by Serge and his comrades was attacked by Stalinists.

Faure, Élie (1873–1937): Medical doctor; author of monumental, respected *History of Art*. Attached to his anarchist uncles, Élie and ÉLISÉE RECLUS. Pro-Dreyfusard. Lectures at Popular University. Supports 1913 anarchist "right of asylum" campaign. Mobilized as army doctor in 1914. Anti-Fascist; a sponsor of Communist-inspired Congress for the Defense of Culture in 1935; supports Spanish Republic. In 1911, Serge attacked Faure's "civilizing role of war" theory.

Faure, Paul (1878–1960): French politician, leader of the SFIO (Socialist Party) between the two World Wars. Supports the Munich Agreements in 1938; joins the Vichy Government in 1940.

Faure, Sébastien (1858–1942): French anarchist. Began in GUESDE's French Marxist Party; in 1888 becomes an anarcho-Communist writer and publicist; founds libertarian school La Ruche; campaigns to free

Dreyfus; antiwar in 1914, arrested in 1918. Editor of *L'Encyclopédie Anarchiste* (1933).

Fedin, Konstantin (1892–1977): Russian novelist; chair of Soviet Writers' Union. Early works inspired by his experiences as a soldier and prisoner of war in 1914–18; serves in Red Army and briefly joins CP, resigns in 1921. Influenced by meeting Maxim GORKY in 1920, in whose circle he became friends with Serge. Along with novelists IVANOV and Tikhonov, joins the Serapion Brothers, a literary group formed in 1921 under influence of the formalist teachings of Zamyatin—favorable to the Revolution but independent of the Party. In 1924 Serge hailed the boldness and realism of their early novels, noting: "These were new men shaped by the storm." Later Fedin's neutrality turned into political conformity. In Mexico, Serge is moved by Fedin's vibrant 1943 *Gorky in Our Midst*, but notes Fedin omits Gorky's bold defense of intellectual freedom during the Civil War and other unorthodoxies: "He [Fedin] survived [...] He must have suffered unbelievably, and if a free Russian literature some day becomes possible no one will be able to explain better than he the nature of that suppression under the terror."

Ferrer, Francisco (1859–1909): Spanish anarcho-syndicalist and educational reformer. Self-educated son of peasants, freethinker; his Escuela Moderna in Barcelona taught rationalist and libertarian principles to its pupils. Much influenced by the French CGT, he translated and distributed French syndicalist material and founded the journal *Solidaridad Obrera*. Executed after suppression of workers' uprising in Barcelona for which he had no responsibility.

Fraina, Louis (1894–1953): Founding member of American CP; broke with the COMINTERN in late 1922; the "grave suspicion" Serge mentions could refer either to a much inflated story of embezzlement or to an earlier charge of being a police spy, of which Fraina was cleared at the time. After his break with Communism, Fraina made a reputation as an economist under the name of Lewis Corey, but still suffered for his past under McCarthy's witch hunt.

Frolova, Elena: Serge's eldest half sister, daughter of PODEREVSKAYA-FROLOVA and Petersburg bank official Vladimir Frolov; raised partially with Serge in Belgium. Marries Rik Hervenz, Belgian (Flemish) engineer, her Russian pupil. Couple moves to Rostov to build tramway and lives through two revolutions; returns to Belgium in 1921. Rik (conservative Flemish nationalist) and Elena (self-proclaimed nihilist) raise four daughters and a son.

Frolova, Vera: Serge's half sister, librarian, member of Soviet translators' union. Mary Jayne Gold reports that in 1940 Serge told her his sister had had an affair with Stalin. In fact, the family was connected with Stalin in Georgia (where her mother, PODEREVSKAYA-FROLOVA, died). The youthful Stalin had courted a Poderevskaya cousin, Julia Kolkberg, who preferred to marry Stalin's Social-Democratic mentor, the MENSHEVIK Kalistrat Gogua (who had helped Stalin escape the police and whom the dictator protected in Moscow). Nonetheless, Frolova was deported to the Gulag and her daughter Marousia is said to have committed suicide.

Frossard, L.-O. (1889–1946): French Socialist politician. General secretary of French Socialist Party (SFIO) in 1918; travels to Russia; adheres to COMINTERN; elected first secretary of new French CP founded at Tours in 1920. Balks at the "21 Conditions" for Communist International membership; resigns in 1923. Rejoins SFIO; Labor Minister in seven French cabinets (1935–40).

Frunze, Mikhail Vasilyevich (1885–1925): Russian Communist leader and military hero. Joins LENIN's BOLSHEVIKS in 1904; leads big strikes during 1905 Revolution; arrested and imprisoned in 1907; elected president of Belorussian Soviet of Peasant Deputies in Feb. 1917; military Commissar in 1918, defeats Admiral Kolchak's White Army; named commander of western, then southern front by Red Army head TROTSKY, reconquers Crimea, drives General Wrangel of White Army out of Russia. Elected to Central Committee in 1921; succeeds Trotsky as head of Revolutionary Military Council (1925). Frunze's death during an unnecessary medical operation ordered by Stalin is the theme of PILNYAK's 1926 short story "The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon."

Fry, Varian (1907–1967): US anti-Nazi journalist and WWII hero. Directs Centre Américain de Secours (American Relief Committee) in Marseille (1940–41) supporting hundreds of European anti-Fascist writers and artists threatened by the Gestapo and helping them to escape Vichy France, including Hannah Arendt, Marc Chagall, Franz Werfel, Victor Brauner, Wifredo Lam, and Serge—who, with VLADIMIR KIBALCHICH and SÉJOURNÉ, shared the Villa Air-Bel (famous for Sunday surrealist games and exhibitions) with Fry; André Breton, his wife, Jacqueline Lamba, and their daughter, Aurore; and Mary Jayne Gold.

Galliffet, General Gaston de (1830–1909): French officer noted for the pitiless severity with which he suppressed the Paris Commune. Later (1899)

appointed for a time as Minister of War. Hence the irony of Serge wearing Galliffets as leggings.

Garnier, Octave (1889–1912): Arrives in Belgium as teenage anarchist draft refuser, joins Brussels Revolutionary Group. Later, part of BONNOT GANG; mercurial, handsome, with "unforgettable dark, hard, burning eyes." Killed at the age of 22 along with VALET in full-scale police siege of their suburban hideout in May 1912.

Ghezzi, Francesco (1893–1942): Outspoken Italian anarcho-syndicalist worker. Attends Third COMINTERN Congress as delegate to Red International of Trade Unions in Moscow, where he becomes Serge's friend and political confidant. Arrested in Berlin on his way home, threatened with deportation to Mussolini's Italy; Serge (in Germany) and others campaign for his release. Granted asylum in the USSR in 1922, Ghezzi lives as a worker and continues to speak his views. Arrested in 1929 and released after a press campaign in Europe. Close to RUSSAKOV family. After Serge's deportation to Orenburg (1933), Ghezzi aids him and his family; when Serge leaves the USSR in 1936, Ghezzi takes charge of his manuscripts. Arrested in 1937 and sent to Vorkuta in the far north, already ill with TB.

Gironella, Enrique (Enrique Pascual Adroher) (1908–1987): Spanish militant, teacher, activist, member of POUM Executive Committee. Arrested in 1937 and implicated in "Trotsky Fascist" show trial along with GORKÍN, ARQUER, and ANDRADE. Emigrates to Mexico, where he founds and edits the journal *Mundo* in collaboration with Gorkín, Serge, PIVERT, and others.

Golberg, Mécislas (Mieczyslaw) (1870–1907): Polish anarchist and bohemian, resident in Paris after 1894; an associate of Apollinaire, Picasso, and other literary-artistic figures of the time, Golberg edited a periodical for the unemployed, evolved a theoretical basis for cubism (*La morale des lignes*, 1908), and acted as a lively influence in the thinking of his milieu.

Goldman, Emma ("Red Emma") (1869–1940): Russian-born Jewish American anarchist and feminist; editor of *Mother Earth*; writer and lecturer on Ibsen, anarchist philosophy, free love, and contraception. Celebrated free-speech fighter and rabble-rouser. Long-term companion of BERKMAN. Deported with Berkman to Russia in 1919; tours as guest of the Soviet; disturbed by lack of freedom; attempts mediation of 1921 Kronstadt conflict. Leaves USSR and writes *My Disillusion in Russia* (1923). In 1936 goes to Spain as guest of the CNT-FAI anarchists, who have taken

over and collectivized many farms and public services and are participating as members of the Republican government. Witnesses their repression by the Stalinists and bemoans lack of support by other anarchists (*Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman and the Spanish Revolution*). Memoir: *Living My Life.*

Gorkín, Julián (J. García Gómez) (1902–1987): Spanish revolutionary, member of POUM Executive Committee, editor of *Batalla.* At 17, secretary of the Socialist Youth in Valencia; co-founds the Valencia CP at 21; leaves Spain to avoid antimilitarism trial, works as a journalist for COMINTERN, attends several Congresses in Moscow; breaks with Party in 1929. International secretary of POUM and Serge's contact in Brussels. Arrested by Stalinist militia in 1937 and tried as "Trotsky Fascist" along with ANDRADE and ARQUER. Gorkín felt he owed his life to Serge's energetic international campaign to investigate the trumped-up charges. He emigrated to Mexico and in 1941 returned the favor by organizing (with MACDONALD in New York) Serge's rescue from Vichy France and shared his Mexican lodgings with him for more than a year. As the object of several Stalinist assassination attempts, in April 1943 he took a bullet meant for Serge during a violent Stalinist attack on a public meeting at which Serge was to speak protesting Stalin's execution of the exiled Polish Socialists ERLICH and ALTER. Gorkín returned to Paris in 1947 (Serge was supposed to join him there) and ended up publishing a pro-Western cultural journal *Cuadernos.*

Gorky, Maxim (Alexei Maximovich Peshkov) (1868–1936): Russian writer. Born in Nizhni-Novgorod (where he apparently was connected with Serge's maternal family, the PODEREVSKYS), orphaned at 12, wanders as a tramp and writes realistic stories about life in the lower depths of society. Joins the Social-Democratic Labor Party in 1899, becomes a friend of LENIN and others. Arrested for protests against Tsar Nicholas II, who repeals his election as Literary Academician, provoking resignation of Chekhov and Korolenko from the academy (1902). His political play *Lower Depths* (1902) creates a sensation. Participates in 1905 Revolution; writes *Children of the Sun* in prison. Emigrates to Capri (1906–13), partly for health reasons (TB); founds workers' school with BOGDANOV and develops heterodox ideas. In US to raise funds, provokes scandal by traveling with woman who is not his wife. Returns to Russia in 1913, close to BOLSHEVIKS in 1917, but revolts against Bolshevik political and cultural repression and censorship of his journal *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life), which he invites Serge to join on his arrival in Russia in 1919.

Serge sees him as "great intercessor" for victims of the CHEKA. Emigrates to Italy again in 1921, but returns from Fascist Italy permanently at Stalin's invitation in 1932 to high honors (Order of Lenin, a mansion, and a villa) and publishes articles whitewashing Stalin's forced-labor concentration camps. Under a cloud from 1934, Gorky's death is surrounded by suspicion. Posthumously canonized as an example of socialist realism.

Gotz, Abraham R. (1882–1937?): Former SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY terrorist and later a strong supporter of KERENSKY; sentenced to death (suspended) in 1921 for role in SR assassinations of BOLSHEVIK leaders; released in 1927. Worked for many years for the State Bank. Deported to Central Asia and believed shot on Stalin's orders in 1937. (May have survived in Gulag to 1940s.)

Gramsci, Antonio (1891–1937): Italian Communist leader and theoretician. First a Socialist, then founder and general secretary of the Italian CP; editor of *Ordine Nuovo* and *L'Unità* (1924); sojourns in Moscow and Vienna (where he meets Serge); arrested in 1926, dies soon after release. Books: *Letters from Prison* and *The Modern Prince*.

Grave, Jean (1854–1939): Anarchist militant and founder of the journal *La révolte*; novelist and essayist; known as "Pope of Anarchism." Turned patriot in 1914.

Griffuelhes, Victor (1874–1923): French syndicalist leader; untheoretical but highly effective secretary of the CGT from 1902 to 1909.

Groman, Vladimir G. (1874–1940): Former MENSHEVIK; a statistician and economist, he was one of the chief inspirers of a planned economy and occupied a number of important planning posts with the State Planning Committee under the Soviet regime.

Guesde, Jules (1845–1922): French Socialist leader. Republican revolutionary under the Second Empire, jailed for opposition to the Franco-Prussian War. Exiled in Switzerland after the suppression of the Commune in 1871. Returns to France, founds *Parti Ouvrier*. First espouses Bakuninist ideas before turning to state collectivism, his own version of Marxism about which Marx remarked: "If I know one thing, it is that I am not a Marxist." Leader of doctrinaire Workers' Party (1880), rejecting reformism and Socialist participation in the cabinet. Turned patriot in 1914 and joined the Cabinet of National Defense at the outbreak of WWI.

Guilbeaux, Henri (1884–1938): French internationalist and pacifist journalist; refugee in Switzerland in 1915; supports Zimmerwald movement, meets LENIN at Kienthal, publishes pro-BOLSHEVIK paper *Demain*.

Condemned to death in 1919 for defeatism and traffic with the enemy; expelled from France; travels to Moscow, joins COMINTERN at First Congress in 1919, and remains until 1929. Returns to France and evolves into a pro-Nazi anti-Semite.

Gumilev, Nikolai Stepanovich (1886–1921): Russian poet and dramatist greatly admired by Serge. Considered a founder of the Acmeist movement and an influence on IVANOV and Nabokov. Born at Kronstadt, son of naval doctor. Early success writing poetry. Travels abroad from 1907 (Paris). Hunts big game in Africa. Marries poet Anna Akhmatova. Returns to Russia in 1914 to fight in cavalry, decorated hero; during Revolution in Russian Expeditionary Corps in Paris, where he meets Serge. Christian and monarchist, Gumilev returns to Russia against friends' advice. Arrested on Aug. 3, 1921, implicated in monarchist plot, Gumilev is executed despite Serge's and GORKY's attempts to save him. LENIN's counterorder apparently arrived too late. His widow, Akhmatova, managed to survive years of degradation under the Stalinist regime and inspired a new generation of poets after the thaw.

Guyot, Yves (1843–1928): French free-trade economist, deputy, and Minister of Public Works from 1889 to 1892.

Hasenclever, Walter (1890–1940): German anti-Fascist expressionist poet and playwright, said to have influenced Brecht. Interned by Vichy French authorities, perishes in Les Milles concentration camp.

Hellfer, Georges (properly: Guelfer): Member of the French military mission in Russia who joined the Revolution with BODY and PASCAL.

Henry, Émile (1872–1894): French anarchist. Threw a bomb into the Café Terminus, which (much against his intentions) caused only minor injuries; executed in May 1894.

Hilferding, Rudolf (1877–1941): Prominent German economist and Social-Democratic politician; author of important works on imperialism and finance capital; Minister of Finance in 1923 when Serge was in Germany.

Huysmans, Camille (1871–1968): Prominent Belgian Socialist and secretary of the SECOND INTERNATIONAL before WWI; later an eminent parliamentarian.

Ilić, Danilo (1890–1915): Serbian nationalist. Sarajevo assassination plotter who was executed for his part in the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW): United States working-class movement of militant syndicalist complexion, founded in 1905 and achieving its prime between 1910 and 1919, when it was crushed during the Red Scare.

Internationals I–IV:

First International Workingmen's Association (IWA): Founded in London in 1864 by Socialist, anarchist, and trade-unionist workers with Marx as corresponding secretary, with between five and eight million members at its height; in 1872 after Paris Commune the IWA splits between Marxian Socialists (whose branch dissolves in New York in 1877) and BAKUNIN's anarchists, whose branch continues.

Second International, or Socialist International (SI): Founded in Paris in 1889. Unites millions of workers worldwide in Social-Democratic parties, including Russia's MENSHEVIKS and BOLSHEVIKS, JAURÈS's French Socialist Party, Debs's US Socialists, and Germany's Social-Democracy with its vast structure of unions, women's and youth associations, newspapers, publishing houses, and local and parliamentary representation. Pledged to resist war, the SI collapses on Aug. 4, 1914, when both German and French Socialists support their governments' bellicism. Revived after WWI and again after WWII, the SI groups reformist "pro-Western" Socialist parties, historically based on the labor movement. SI affiliates have participated regularly in capitalist governments, sometimes in alliance with the Communists, more frequently with the center.

Third International (COMINTERN or CI): Founded in Moscow in March 1919 after the collapse of the SECOND INTERNATIONAL during WWI. Successor to Zimmerwald and Kienthal antiwar conferences. Regroups antiwar, antireformist Socialists and syndicalists in support of Soviet power and world proletarian revolution. LENIN's 1920 "21 Conditions" for CI membership provokes splits in Socialist movement. After 1928, the CI becomes an "instrument of Stalin's foreign policy" (TROTSKY), veering from ultra-left ("the socialists, not the fascists are the main enemy"), to center (Popular Front with Socialists and liberals), to far right. Dissolved by Stalin during WWII as a gesture to the Allies. Serge worked on its staff from the beginning, along with MAZIN and BODY under the presidency of ZINOVIEV, but contrary to legend was never a member of its Executive. From 1921 through 1925 Serge was attached to *Inprekorr*, the COMINTERN press service—first in Berlin and then in Vienna. In late 1925, concerned over Moscow-dominated bureaucratic conformism and CI errors in Germany, Serge resigns his CI post in Vienna, switches his CP membership from French to Russian, and returns to the USSR to oppose Stalin in the inner-Party struggle.

Fourth International (FI): Founded in 1938, as a rival to Stalin's THIRD INTERNATIONAL and the SECOND INTERNATIONAL by exiled TROTSKY on the premise that the main obstacle to world revolution was a "crisis of leadership" in the labor movement. Repressed by both Stalinists and capitalists. Strong minority attraction among anti-Stalinist revolutionaries, intellectuals, and workers. Today the FI is fragmented but still active after multiple sectarian splits over the "correct line" for world revolutionary leadership.

Istrati, Panaït (1884–1935): Francophone Romanian storyteller; led a vagabond existence for much of his life; won a reputation as the "Balkan GORKY" after being discovered by ROLLAND. Conducted revolutionary work in Romania with RAKOVSKY; traveled to the USSR with Nikos Kazantzakis in 1927–28, where he became a close friend of Serge and his family, whom he defended by publicizing "the RUSSAKOV affair" in Paris. One volume of Istrati's three-volume exposé of the USSR, *Vers l'autre flame*, was written by Serge, another by SOUVARINE. Disoriented and ill, Istrati returned to Romania and died of TB in great privation.

Ivanov, Vsevolod (1895–1963): Soviet novelist. Led a varied life as sailor, actor, circus juggler, typesetter, comedian, and wrestler; joined the Red Army in 1917; early stories on the Civil War—"Partisans," "Armored Train No. 1469," "Adventures of a Fakir" (1934–35)—are based on his circus experiences; wrote novels on WWII. GORKY protégé; joins the Serapion Brothers circle. In 1924 Serge praised Ivanov's dynamic, realistic depictions of Siberian Red partisans struggling against Admiral Kolchak's Western-backed White Terror: "When we read Vsevolod Ivanov we feel as if we are being carried off in an express train across the Russian steppes."

Jaurès, Jean (1859–1914): French Socialist leader, orator, and parliamentarian; founding editor of *L'Humanité*; unifier of French Socialism; leading member of the SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, noted for his pacificism. Assassinated July 31, 1914, at the outbreak of WWI. Prolific writer: *L'Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française*, *L'Armée nouvelle.*

Jeunes Gardes Socialistes: Socialist Young Guards, founded in 1890 and affiliated with the Belgian Workers' Party.

Joffe, Adolf Abramovich (1883–1927): Russian revolutionary and Soviet diplomat of Crimean (Karaite) origin. Joins the Russian Social-Democratic Party as a youth, studies in Berlin, returns to Russia, and participates in

1905 Revolution. Exiled, edits *Pravda* in Vienna with TROTSKY, who becomes his close friend. Studies medicine and psychoanalysis. With Trotsky, joins the BOLSHEVIKS in 1917 and supports October Revolution (rejected by ZINOVIEV and Kamenev). Reluctantly signs Brest-Litovsk armistice with Germany; Soviet ambassador to Berlin, expelled for "Bolshevik agitation" on eve of Nov. 1918 German Revolution. Negotiates peace with Poland, Austria, and the Baltic states in 1920; Soviet ambassador to China and Japan. Supports Trotsky's Left Opposition and, ill and discouraged, commits suicide in protest when Trotsky is expelled from the Party.

Jogiches, Leo (Tyszko) (1867–1919): Founder of Polish Social-Democracy and later of German Communism; lover and collaborator of LUXEMBURG. During WWI organized the first SPARTACUS group along with LIEBKNECHT; after the assassination of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, continued revolutionary activity and was murdered in prison in March 1919.

Kamo (Party name of S. A. Ter-Petrosian) (1882–1922): BOLSHEVIK revolutionary who committed numerous robberies, was sentenced to death four times, and feigned insanity for four years in Germany in order to prevent his extradition to Imperial Russia (Koté Tsintsadze, Kamo's less sensational colleague, undertook similar activities in the pre-Revolutionary period); later became a prominent Georgian Bolshevik, at odds with Stalin; was arrested in 1928, and died in captivity in 1930.

Karakhan, Lev M. (1889–1937): Former MENSHEVIK, then a BOLSHEVIK and participant in the October Revolution; negotiator for the Soviet side at the Brest-Litovsk Treaty (1918); ambassador to China in 1923. Shot without public trial.

Kerensky, Alexander (1881–1970): Liberal Russian politician, last Prime Minister of the 1917 Provisional Government. Member of Trudoviki, a moderate Labor Party allied with the SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARIES, leader of the parliamentary opposition in the Tsarist Duma (1912); plays an active part in the February Revolution, both as Vice President of the Petrograd Soviet and as Minister of Justice in the Provisional Government. In June, as Minister of War, renews WWI offensive against Austro-German armies despite exhaustion and demoralization of Russia's peasants and workers in uniform. Assumes premiership during the July 1917 crisis amid renewed strikes and mass desertions from the army. Faced with an attempted right-wing coup by General Kornilov in late Aug., Kerensky is forced to arm the riotous BOLSHEVIK-influenced

workers, thus alienating the officers of the army. These arms are used in the Oct. 1917 Bolshevik-organized insurrection which overthrew Kerensky's self-proclaimed Russian Republic, practically without a shot, and proclaimed "All Power to the Soviets." In exile remained true to his liberal principles, supported neither the Reds nor the Whites in the Civil War, and died in Stanford, CA.

Kibalchich, Leonid Ivanovich ("Léon") (1861–1935): Serge's father; impoverished anti-Tsarist Russian émigré intellectual. Recent archival research reveals that Kibalchich, like his illustrious namesake and distant relative NIKOLAI IVANOVICH KIBALCHICH (seven years his senior), came from a priestly Chernigov family, studied science, lost his faith, was expelled for revolutionary literature, fell under the influence of the NARODNAYA VOLYA (Peoples' Will) Party. Neither his presence in St. Petersburg, in the Imperial Guard, nor in the Narodnaya Volya fighting organization in the south (as reported by Serge and VLADIMIR KIBALCHICH) could be documented. Police files confirm he left Kiev as a fugitive and went into exile in Switzerland, where he studied medicine and science; in 1888–89 he hooks up with another radical Russian student, VERA MIKHAILOVNA PODEREVSKAYA-FROLOVA, who gives birth to VICTOR KIBALCHICH in Brussels (Dec. 30, 1890) and RAOUL (in 1893). A contemporary Brussels police-spy report depicts him down at heel and tragically depressed. Around 1904 Leonid, a bigamist, moves in with his other wife in Brussels, with whom he has several children. (Victor chooses to live alone.) Subsequently employed as ship's doctor (uncredentialed); ends up in Brazil, where he establishes his second family. Leonid corresponds with Serge, mostly on scientific subjects, over many years; a snapshot Leonid sent to Russia shows him on horseback, a country doctor; he died alone, more or less a derelict, in Rio Grande del Sur (see Richard Greeman, "The Kibalchich Legend," *Massachusetts Review* [Spring 2012]).

Kibalchich, Nikolai Ivanovich (1854–1881): Russian revolutionary and scientist; one of the Populist "Martyrs of March 1, 1881," hanged for the assassination of Tsar Alexander II; distant relative of and mythic role model for both Serge and his father. Born in the rebellious Chernigov district of South Russia (Ukraine) into the Kibalchich clan of Orthodox priests. Studies science and medicine, loses faith, arrested, and expelled for possessing revolutionary literature. Emerges from prison a "changed man"; contributes a seminal article to the journal of the Populist NARODNAYA VOLYA group (synthesizing Marxism and Popu-

lism) and joins its Executive Committee to carry out the death sentence passed on the emperor. Fabricates the bombs that killed Alexander II. In his death cell prepares a design for a "flying machine" propelled by rockets, claimed by later Soviet science as prefiguring Sputnik. The Soviets named a crater on the moon for him. On the eve of his death, Kibalchich was said to be "concerned only with the fate of his project, like Archimedes for the fate of his circles."

Kibalchich, Raoul-Albert (1893–1902?): Serge's younger brother, who died undernourished in Liège. Serge used his name "R. Albert" as a pseudonym in Germany.

Kibalchich, Victor Napoléon (1890–1947): Writer and revolutionary. Pseudonyms: le Rétif, le Masque, Yor, Victor-Serge, R. Albert, Victor Serge.

Kibalchich, Vladimir Alexander ("Vlady") (1920–2005): Serge's son and companion in deportation (Orenburg) and exile (Belgium, France, Mexico). Respected painter, engraver, and muralist in Mexico. Raised among revolutionaries; claimed to have peed on LENIN (who was holding him as an infant while his mother typed). As Leningrad youth, skips school, wanders Hermitage, paints. At age 13 sneaks past guards into Leningrad GPU HQ, demands news of his arrested father (and succeeds). Expelled from Orenburg Gymnasium for speaking out (Gide writes in protest in 1934). In Paris active in far-left groups, solidarity with Spanish POUM; frequents Louvre, studios of Joseph Lacasse, Victor Brauner, Oscar Dominguez, Wifredo Lam, André Masson, and Aristide Maillol in Paris (1937–40); sojourns in Marseille with surrealists (1940–41). Settles in Mexico, marries Isabel Diaz; many shows and prizes; scholarships and travels in Europe and the US; between 1974 and 1982 paints his masterwork, murals on the theme "Revolutions and Elements" at the Miguel Lerdo de Tejada Library, Mexico City. See www.vlady.org.

Kibalchich-Vidal, Jeannine (1935–): Daughter of Serge and LIUBA RUSSAKOVA. First seen by Serge as an infant in April 1936 in Moscow. Mother subject to violent rages, soon interned. Serge arranges care locally, then (when he moves to Paris) with French farm couple at Pontarnier. Taken to Mexico by Serge's third wife, SÉJOURNÉ (1942); lives with Serge and Séjourné until 1947. Boarding schools. Divorced, two sons. Secretary at UNAM Sciencias Politicas, Mexico City. (See her "Victor Serge, My Father," in *The Ideas of Victor Serge*, S. Weissman, ed. [Glasgow: Critique, 1997]).

Kirov, Sergei (1886–1934): Head of CP in Leningrad, assassinated in Dec. 1934. BOLSHEVIK from 1906, participates in 1905 and 1917 Revolu-

tions; Civil War commander in North Caucasus, enforcing Bolshevik rule. Promoted by Stalin to head Leningrad Party organization (1926). Somewhat independent of Stalin and conciliatory toward defeated oppositionists in early 1930s; extremely popular in Party, perceived as rival to Stalin's extreme policies. Extraordinary laxity allowed the assassin, Nikolayev, a disgruntled Party member, to penetrate security at SMOLNY. His assassination, presumed ordered by Stalin, was used as a pretext for the Great Purges. Serge's novel *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, set at a somewhat later date, describes a fictional assassination of a high Party official and the ramifications of the investigation it engenders.

Kolarov, Vasil (1877–1950): Leading COMINTERN emissary to West European parties, secretary to the Comintern Executive (1922–24), and Prime Minister of Bulgaria after Dimitrov's death in 1949.

Kollontai, Alexandra (1872–1952): Russian revolutionary; under Soviets, first woman cabinet minister and first woman ambassador in history. MENSHEVIK for a while, then a prominent BOLSHEVIK. Commissar of Social Welfare in the first Soviet government; Left Communist, then leader with Schliapnikov of the 1920–21 Workers' Opposition; long-term relations with BODY. Sympathized with the Trotskyist Opposition but subsequently conformed. Soviet ambassador in Mexico, Norway, and Sweden.

Kotziubinsky, Yuri (1897–1937): Russian Communist. Member of 1923 Opposition; diplomat in Vienna, then Warsaw; a leader of the United Opposition; expelled and executed without trial, like the majority of the Communist oppositionists who, as Serge often remarks, refused to capitulate or make false confessions.

Krassin, Leonid (1870–1926): Old Bolshevik revolutionary and civil engineer. During 1905 Revolution sets up underground printshop, bomb factory; finances Party through bank robberies. (LENIN hypocritically "disapproves.") Retires from Party and makes millions as an engineer. Rejoins BOLSHEVIKS at February Revolution. Soviet trade envoy and ambassador (Great Britain, France). Elected to Central Committee (1924). Erased from USSR history books during Purges.

Krestinsky, Nikolai N. (1883–1938): BOLSHEVIK since 1905, repeatedly arrested; People's Commissar for Finance after 1917, later deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs; secretary of the Central Committee 1919–21; defendant in the 1938 BUKHARIN-RYKOV Third Moscow trial; repudiated his confession on the first day and repudiated the repudiation on the next; sentenced to be shot.

Kropotkin, Peter (1842–1921): Russian prince, geographer, and outstanding anarcho-Communist writer (*Mutual Aid*, *The Conquest of Bread*). Raised as Imperial Cadet, later a cavalry officer; studies mathematics and geography; explorer. Joins anarchist International Workers Association in Switzerland; imprisoned for agitation in Russia (1874); escapes from jail and makes his way to England, Switzerland (where he publishes *Revolt*), and France (where he is imprisoned for five years). Settles in England; writes *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* and *History of French Revolution*. Supports Entente in WWII; returns to Russia after the February Revolution. Serge saw his funeral as the last time anarchists were permitted to gather and speak openly in Soviet Russia. After the death of Kropotkin's widow in 1938, the Kropotkin Museum was suppressed and its contents were dispersed.

Kun, Béla (1886–1938): Hungarian Communist leader and COMINTERN official. Discovers Bolshevism in Russia as Hungarian POW; active in Siberia, against the SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY revolt in Moscow (1918). Returns to Hungary to found CP. In March 1919 leaves prison to become the main leader of the short-lived Hungarian Republic of Workers' Councils, the first to follow in the footsteps of Russia. Loses popularity by imposing harsh Communist collectivist regime, outlawing parties and newspapers, and ordering summary executions of opponents. Tricked by CLEMENCEAU, calls off victorious Red Army offensive. Overthrown after five months by Romanian invasion and Admiral Horthy's White Terror. Refugee in Russia, appointed Red Civil War Commander in Crimea, orders controversial shooting of captured White officers. Comintern envoy in Germany held responsible by LENIN for disastrous 1921 "March action." Remains Comintern official. Arrested in 1937 for Trotskyism and later shot.

Lagardelle, Hubert (1874–1958): Founded the review *Le mouvement socialiste* (1898); in 1904 joins the Socialist Party and advocates a variety of Sorelian syndicalism; went to Italy after the rise of Fascism and became economic adviser and confidant to Mussolini; was Pétain's Minister of Labor (1942–43).

Laurat, Lucien (Otto Maschl) (1898–1973): Co-founder of Austrian CP; Marxist economist, journalist; with his wife, Marcelle Pomera, close friend and ardent defender of Serge. First to develop the theory of "bureaucratic collectivism" to characterize the Russian socio-economic regime. Author of *L'Accumulation du Capital d'après Rosa Luxemburg*, *Économie dirigée et socialization*, and *Le Marxisme en faillite?*

Lavrov, Peter (1823–1900): Russian liberal intellectual; theoretician of Populist Socialism of the non-insurrectionary school; published journal *Forward!* in exile. Member of FIRST INTERNATIONAL. His *Historical Letters* (1870) greatly influenced revolutionary movements in Russia.

Lazerevich, Nicholas (1895–1975): Anarchist militant; companion of Ida Mett. Born, like Serge, in Belgium of Russian revolutionary émigré parents; volunteers in Red Army in 1919; arrested in 1924 for anarcho-syndicalist agitation, but allowed to leave Russia after campaign for his liberation.

Lefeuvre, René (1902–1988): French Marxist publisher and militant. Revolutionary Socialist active in French Socialist Party and PIVERT's Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party. His review *Masses* (1933–48) and ongoing Éditions Spartacus published Serge, LUXEMBURG, Pannekoek, and Gorter.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilich (Ulyanov) (1870–1924): Principal founder of Russian Communism and Soviet State. Marxist economist (*The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, 1899; *Imperialism*, 1916), revolutionary theoretician (*What Is to Be Done?*, 1906; *State and Revolution*, 1917), and philosopher (*Empirio-criticism*, 1912; *Philosophical Notebooks*, published posthumously).

Levi, Paul (1883–1930): LUXEMBURG's lawyer and a leader of the Independent Social-Democrats; co-founder of the SPARTACUS LEAGUE and later a leader of the early German CP; supported Serrati's objections to the "21 Conditions"; expelled from the KPD for public criticism of the March action; after 1921 founded a small independent group, then joined the left wing of the Social-Democrats; apparently committed suicide.

Libertad, Albert Joseph (1875–1908): French anarcho-individualist (*Le culte de la charogne et autres écrits*). Charismatic eccentric Parisian personality; crippled street fighter (he uses his crutches as weapons); lives in free union with pair of sisters. Founds *Causeries populaires* (1902) and the journal *L'Anarchie*, later edited by Serge.

Liebknecht, Karl (1871–1919): German revolutionary Socialist; son of Wilhelm Liebknecht, prominent German Social-Democrat; anti-militarist; as member of Reichstag, votes against war credits at outbreak of WWI; jailed for opposition. Released by German Revolution in Nov. 1918, proclaims Socialist Republic; with LUXEMBURG founds SPARTAKISTS, later German Communist Party; murdered Jan. 15, 1919, by FREIKORPS under orders of Social-Democrat Noske.

Londres, Albert (1884–1932): A crusading, world-traveling correspondent

who successfully campaigned for the release of Serge's 1913 co-defendant, the innocent DIEUDONNÉ, from the dreadful penal colony of Cayenne.

Longuet, Jean (1876–1938): French Socialist lawyer, grandson of Marx; editor of *L'Humanité* when it belonged to the Socialist Party, then a founder of *Le Populaire*. Député and author.

Loriot, Fernand (1870–1932): French Socialist, later Communist. Meets LENIN and GUILBEAUX in spring of 1917. Supports Soviets (1919). Elected to Central Committee of French CP (1920). Attends Second, Third, and Fourth COMINTERN congresses. Denounces the expulsions of MONATTE, ROSMER, and SOUVARINE (1925); breaks from Party (1926).

Lorulot, André (1885–1963): Highly eccentric radical freethinker; edited the anarcho-individualist weekly *L'Anarchie* prior to its takeover by Serge and his companion MAÎTREJEAN in 1911. Probably the "libertarian journalist" Serge suspected of being the police informer in the 1912 "BONNOT affair."

Lukács, Georg (1885–1971): Hungarian Communist philosopher and literary critic (*Theory of the Novel*). Joins Hungarian CP in 1918; Commissar of Education in short-lived 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic. Flees to Vienna, where he works with Serge and GRAMSCI in *Inprekorr*. Saved from extradition by Thomas Mann. Writes *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), sympathizes with Left Opposition, opposes KUN. In 1925 makes his self-criticism, removed from the Central Committee of the Hungarian CP. In exile in Moscow in 1930–31 and 1933–44 (Serge was mistaken about meeting Lukács in Moscow as early as 1928 or 1929). Returns to Hungary in 1945; participates in 1956 Hungarian Revolution, member of Imry Nagy's brief reform Communist government. After Russian invasion, recants, avoids execution, rejoins Party.

Lunacharsky, Anatoly (1875–1933): Russian Marxist intellectual and Soviet Culture Minister. Joins Social-Democratic Party. Studies in Zurich where he meets LENIN and LUXEMBURG; BOLSHEVIK in 1903; sides with BOGDANOV in "empirio-criticism" conflict and joins him and GORKY in worker school in Capri, later in Paris. Rejoins Party along with TROTSKY and others in 1917. First Soviet Commissar of "Enlightenment": encourages education, artistic innovation, ballet, Proletkult (with Bogdanov). Erudite, speaks six languages. Stripped of influence by Stalin (1929); Soviet ambassador to the League of Nations and to Spain. Expunged from official history during Purges.

Luxemburg, Rosa (1871–1919): Brilliant Polish Jewish revolutionary leader

and Marxist theoretician. Multilingual internationalist active in Polish, Russian, and (mainly) German Social-Democratic parties. Opposes Socialist opportunism (*Reform or Revolution?*, 1898); participates in 1905–06 Revolution in Russian Empire, emphasizes power of spontaneous movements (*The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*). Opposes WWI with LIEBKNECHT; jailed in Feb. 1915, writes *The Junius Pamphlet* attacking Socialist Party support for barbarous war. Freed in Feb. 1916, rearrested in July, liberated by the German Revolution of Nov. 1918. Leader with Liebknecht of revolutionary SPARTACUS LEAGUE; arrested (with Liebknecht) after the failure of the Berlin "Spartakist uprising" in Feb. 1919 and brutally murdered by right-wing Freikorps officers under orders from Gustav Noske, the Socialist war commissar of the Revolutionary German Republic, her Social-Democratic Party "comrade." Luxemburg firmly supported the BOLSHEVIK Revolution but disagreed with LENIN on distributing land to peasantry, national self-determination, the dictatorial role of the Party, and lack of freedom. Her *Accumulation of Capital* is considered a major contribution to Marxism; her *Letters* reveal a far-ranging intellect and a passionate, humanistic, artistic nature.

Macdonald, Dwight (1906–1982): American journalist and critic; formerly a Trotskyist, later a pacifist, then an independent liberal cultural critic; edited the journal *Politics* from 1944 to 1949. With his then-wife Nancy Macdonald (founder of Spanish War Relief), he devoted enormous energies to rescuing Serge and his family from Fascist Europe, finding them visas and keeping them alive.

Maeterlinck, Maurice (1861–1949): Belgian Symbolist poet and dramatist (Nobel Prize 1911). His 1908 play *The Bluebird* was first performed in 1911 at Stanislavky's Moscow Art Theater. Serge later cast his lover, LIUBA RUSSAKOVA, in the image of Maeterlink's bluebird.

Maîtrejean, Rirette (Anna Estorges) (1887–1968): Serge's first wife. Anarchist feminist militant and union proofreader. Mother of two girls. Meets Serge at Lille in 1909. They live together in Paris as lovers; co-editors of *L'Anarchie*, replacing LORULOT and CALLEMIN's group in 1911. Co-defendants in the sensational trial of the "Tragic Bandits" of anarchism in 1913; Maîtrejean is acquitted and marries Serge in prison in 1915 to have the right to visit and correspond. Briefly reunited in Barcelona in 1917.

Makhno, Nestor (1888–1934): Ukrainian peasant organizer and guerrilla; during the Russian Civil War leader of insurgent anarchist Black

Armies allied with the Reds, ultimately defeating the German-backed Whites in Ukraine. Develops brilliant Cossack tactics based on horse-drawn mobile machine guns. Attempts to set up autonomous anarchist territory in liberated Ukraine. In alliance with Reds, drives General Wrangel's White Army from Ukraine; two weeks later Reds break alliance, arrest and shoot Makhnovist military leaders at joint conference, order dissolution of Black Armies, and attack them with shock troops in Nov. 1920. His troops defeated, Makhno emigrates and settles in Paris, active in anarchist circles, works as a carpenter, dies of TB. See *The Unknown Revolution* by eyewitness and supporter VOLINE.

Malaquais, Jean (1908–1988): Francophone Polish novelist and Marxist militant. Emigrates to France in 1930 as laborer; encouraged by André Gide; fights in Spanish Civil War; awarded Prix Renaudot and receives recognition from TROTSKY in 1939 for *Les Javanais* (about immigrant miners in France). Stateless, mobilized in 1940 (*Journal de guerre*); emigrates to Mexico and participates in Socialism and Freedom group with Serge, PIVERT, GORKÍN, and GIRONELLA. Bitter political quarrel with Serge, piteously depicted as a character in *World Without a Visa*, Malaquais's novel (prefaced in US edition by Norman Mailer) about anti-Fascist exiles trapped in Marseille in 1940–41.

Man, Henri de (1885–1953): Belgian Socialist leader, famous for his *Plan du Travail* (1933), advocating planning within a mixed economy. Collaborated (as adviser to Leopold III) with the German occupying authorities during WWII. Retired to Switzerland at the end of the war.

Mann, Heinrich (1871–1950): German novelist and playwright, an exile in France and the US after the rise of Hitler. Brother of better-known novelist Thomas Mann.

Martinet, Marcel (1887–1944): Revolutionary French poet; opponent of WWI, friend of MONATTE and ROSMER, close to TROTSKY from WWI until the latter's murder; resigned as literary editor of *L'Humanité* after the rise of Stalinism; main prophet of proletarian literature in France; Serge's literary mentor during gestation of his early novels (important correspondence). Defends Serge in 1935–36. (See George Paizis, *Marcel Martinet* [London, 2007]).

Matteotti, Giacomo (1885–1924): Italian Socialist and anti-Fascist; peasant leader and deputy; opposed "united front" with the Communists; fearlessly outspoken against Mussolini's violence; murdered on Fascist instructions to silence him.

Mauricius (Maurice Van-Damme) (1886–1974): French anarchist. Collabo-

rator with Serge at *L'Anarchie* (1911); visits Soviet Russia; his *Au pays des Soviets: Neuf mois d'aventures* (1922) is bitter against Serge.

Maurín, Joaquín (1896–1973): Spanish revolutionary. Teachers' union activists from Lérida; meets Serge in Moscow as CNT delegate in 1921; marries sister of SOUVARINE; founds CP in Catalonia; founds and edits *La Batalla*. Imprisoned in Montjuich for four years under Primo de Rivera. Breaks with COMINTERN (1931), founds Workers' and Peasants' Bloc; merges with NIN's Left Communists to form POUM. Captured by the Fascists under an alias in the first days of Franco's putsch, presumed killed; later condemned to death; survives ten years' imprisonment; emigrates to New York. Author of several books of history and sociology.

Maximalists: Party that split from the SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARIES in 1906, advocating the socialization of industry as well as of land, together with a wider application of terrorism (to include pillage and incendiarism of estates, as well as individual assassination).

Mayakovsky, Vladimir (1893–1930): Soviet poet and playwright; spokesman of Russian futurism. Teenage Marxist, later BOLSHEVIK (1908); starts writing poetry in prison. Studies at Moscow Art School (expelled in 1914) and joins futurists; publishes bitter, vernacular modernist poems. During Soviet Revolution recites "Left March" for troops and designs propaganda posters. Vastly popular Soviet poet and prominent leader of Left Art Front during 1920s. Travels abroad, has love affairs, success. Suicide in 1930. Reputation defended by Stalin. During post-Stalinist thaw inspires Russian poets Yevtushenko, Voznesensky, and singer-songwriter Vladimir Vysotsky. Serge alludes to Mayakovsky's parody of Moussorgsky's famous song "The Flea." In Mayakovsky's version, the Flea is General Denikin of the White Army.

Mazin, Vladimir (Vladimir Ossipovich Lichtenstadt) (1882–1919): Idealistic Russian-Jewish revolutionary intellectual; Serge's senior co-worker in creating COMINTERN press services. MAXIMALIST, participates in 1905 Revolution; spends ten years in Schlüsselburg prison, where he completes a study of *Goethe and the Philosophy of Nature*, translates Kant and Baudelaire, and converts to Marxism. In Feb. 1917 a revolutionary crowd storms the Schlüsselburg Bastille, liberates Mazin and installs him directly in the Town Hall as President of the Soviet. Like the MENSHEVIKS, considers Russia unripe for socialist revolution, fears civil war; withdraws to agricultural commune. Early in 1919, despite libertarian reservations, joins BOLSHEVIKS as best method to

defend the embattled revolution; influences Serge—who admired him greatly and loved him like a brother—to join Party in May 1919. Imbued with ethic of sacrifice, Mazin insists on being sent to the front, where on Oct. 15 he is killed leading his men in defense of Petrograd against the near-successful offensive of White General Yudenich. Serge named his son Vladimir in his memory.

Mensheviks: Minority faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP—founded 1898); opposed to the BOLSHEVIK (majority) faction, so named after the final vote at the 1903 conference (after the walkout of the Jewish Bund), which gives a slim majority to LENIN's followers over Martov's. The underlying issue was Lenin's conception of a Party of professional revolutionaries, as opposed to Martov's broader-based definition of Party membership. The factions drew different conclusions after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution, during which the Mensheviks had been the more influential group. Arguing as Marxists that precapitalist Russia needed a bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Mensheviks leaned toward legal activity and cooperation with bourgeois liberal reformers. The Bolsheviks leaned more toward the peasant-based SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARIES and prepared for armed revolution of the workers in alliance with the peasantry. The split into two parties, the RSDLP-Bolshevik and the RSDLP-Menshevik was consecrated at the 1912 conference. In 1914 some Mensheviks supported national defense but the much larger group joined with the Bolsheviks and other antiwar revolutionaries in opposing WWI. In Feb. 1917 the Revolution brought Mensheviks and Bolsheviks even closer together working in the Soviets; on the other hand in May, Tsereteli and the reformist Menshevik leaders joined the liberal Provisional Government (along with the Social-Revolutionaries) and supported pursuing WWI on the Allied side. As a result, Menshevik popularity declined (only 3% of votes for the Constituent-Assembly), while the Bolsheviks' rose (to over 25%). The Mensheviks remained influential in the trade unions long after the October Revolution, but their press was often censored and they were outlawed in 1921. Although some Mensheviks joined the Whites in the Civil War, most remained true to their Social-Democratic views in exile, and their Russian-language press was well informed about Soviet affairs.

Mesnil, Jacques (1872–1940): Socialist writer and journalist; with wife, Clara (*née* Kœtlitz), very close to Serge; supporter of ROLLAND's antimilitarism during WWI; Serge collaborator during early days of the

COMINTERN in Russia. Author of a remarkable book on Botticelli evoked in Serge's posthumous novel *Unforgiving Years*.

Molins y Fábrega, Narciso (1910–1964): Spanish revolutionary journalist, member of POUM, editor of *La Batalla*. Organizes committee to defend Spanish Revolution (Paris, 1937); friend of VLADIMIR KIBALCHICH. Author (with artist José Bartoli) of book on sufferings of Spanish Republican exiles in France (*Campos de Concentracion*, 1944).

Monatte, Pierre (1881–1960): Anarcho-syndicalist; strike leader, union organizer, journalist; founder of the syndicalist weekly *La Vie ouvrière*, important in the years before WWI (which Monatte is among the first to oppose). Arrested with SOUVARINE, LORIOT, and 15 others during 1920 railroad workers' general strike. Joins French CP in 1923, elected to Central Committee in a 1924, and expelled six months later. Publishes monthly *La Révolution prolétarienne*, Serge's platform over many years. Employed, like Serge, as a proofreader.

Münzenberg, Willi (1889–1940): German Communist leader and international publicist; secretary of the International Socialist Youth League (1914–19) and then of the Young Communist International; later an outstanding behind-the-scenes organizer of many "front" movements; broke with the Party in 1937 after the Moscow Trials; found hanged in France in 1940 after escaping from an internment camp. His death is variously ascribed to the Gestapo and the NKVD.

Narodnaya Volya (Peoples' Will or Peoples' Freedom Party): Russian revolutionary anti-Tsarist group; Populists. Party of idealistic radical intelligentsia drawn from the noble, priestly, and working classes dedicated to Socialism; violently opposes autocracy; its Executive Committee passes a death sentence on Tsar Alexander II (who was assassinated on March 1, 1881) and takes responsibility for their act; hanged were Zhelyabov, Ryssakov, Sophia Perovskaya (the woman who waves the handkerchief in Serge's account and the actual leader of the assassination team), and scientist NIKOLAI IVANOVICH KIBALCHICH, whose myth overshadowed Serge's childhood. Like Serge, LENIN grew up under the shadow of a Narodnik gallows: his elder brother Alexander was hanged in 1887 for an attempt on the Tsar. Serge wrote that the Narodnik ethos of sacrifice had "formed the character" of his whole Russian revolutionary generation.

Naville, Pierre (1904–1993): Early surrealist; Trotskyist leader; co-edits with Benjamin Péret the review *La Révolution surréaliste* (1924–25); joins Communists and collaborates on *Clarté* (1926); invited to Mos-

cow (with ROSENTHAL) for tenth anniversary of Soviet Revolution; introduced by Serge to TROTSKY, PREOBRAZHENSKY, returns a Trotskyist. Writes *Trotsky vivant* (1962). Breaks with Breton's surrealist group, later with Trotsky's FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. Later writes on sociology of labor and on China. Edits and publishes in France Serge's *The Chinese Revolution.*

Nechayev, Sergey (1847–1882): Russian revolutionary conspirator of the nihilist tendency, known for his magnetic personality and ruthless use of any means necessary to bend others to his purposes. Nechayev believed that by provoking repression and making things worse he could shock people and hasten the revolution. Dostoevsky, in his novel *The Devils,* dramatized Nechayev's organizing of the collective murder of Ivanov, a fellow conspirator, in order to reinforce his hold over the others. This incident led to Nechayev's expulsion from the FIRST INTERNATIONAL in 1870. Nechayev's enduring influence on the anarchist BAKUNIN caused harm to the latter's reputation.

Neumann, Heinz (1902–1937): German Communist leader. Participates in abortive Hamburg uprising of 1923 and flees to Vienna. Sympathizes with Left; later a Stalinist. Organizer of the Canton communist uprising in 1927, in which 25,000 Communists died (Serge's article on this Stalinist disaster got him expelled). Back in Germany, as editor of the *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag) and Communist member of the Reichstag, Neumann champions Stalin's disastrous "Social-fascist" attacks on the Socialists, which opened the door to Hitler. After the rise to power of Nazism, he took refuge in the Soviet Union and perished in the Purges of 1937; his widow, Margarete Buber-Neumann, was handed over to the Gestapo in 1940 after the Nazi–Soviet Pact.

New Economic Policy (NEP) (1921–1929): Partial restoration of capitalism decreed by LENIN in 1921 in the wake of the Kronstadt sailors' revolt in order to rebuild Russian economy devastated by WWI and Civil War and put an end to the system of confiscations known as "War Communism." Under this form of State capitalism, the Soviet Government maintained control of the "commanding heights" of the economy, while small business and peasant agriculture were allowed to flourish. First proposed by TROTSKY. (1920), later favored by BUKHARIN and the right, the NEP succeeded in restoring production to pre-WWI levels, but produced inequality and slow industrialization. Replaced in 1928 by Stalin's Five-Year Plan, with its forced collectivization of agriculture and its Stakhanovite industrial crash programs.

Nikolayenko, Dr.: Ukrainian anarchist; friend of the RUSSAKOV family in Marseille, where he acts as revolutionary Russian consul from 1917 to 1919; linked with the Russian sailors' union, organizes strike on ships carrying munitions to the Whites in the Russian Civil War; interned by authorities. Repatriated with Serge and Russakovs in hostage exchange in Dec. 1918. Tall, gaunt, quick-witted, travels widely in the Soviet Union as an anthropologist and explorer. May have provided inspiration for Serge's story "White Sea."

Nin, Andrés (Catalan: Andreu) (1892–1937): Spanish revolutionary. Syndicalist CNT militant in Barcelona; falsely implicated in assassination attempt of Premier Dato in 1921; elected CNT delegate to THIRD INTERNATIONAL Congress, manages to escape to Moscow. Leader with Lozovsky of Red International of Trade Union; joins TROTSKY's Left Opposition (1926); close friend of Serge in Moscow; translates Dostoevsky; permitted to return to Spain in 1930. Forms Spanish Left Communist group, but differs with Trotsky over tactics and merges with MAURÍN's Workers' and Peasants' Bloc to form POUM. Justice Minister of Catalonia after Popular Front victory at beginning of Civil War; inaugurates Popular Tribunals; deposed under Communist pressure. Kidnapped, tortured, and assassinated by Stalinists under orders of GPU General Orlov in the wake of Barcelona insurrection of May 1937.

Old Believers: Religious sect whose refusal to submit to the official Russian Orthodox Church dates from the 17th century.

Parijanine, Maurice (1885–1937): Writer, poet, and collaborator with Serge in the translation work of the Communist International's Executive; the subject of Serge's memoir, *Deux recontres*.

Pascal, Pierre (1890–1983): French Russian scholar, historian; devout Christian; École Normale, *agrégé* in Russian; sojourns in Russia in 1911; returns to Moscow in 1916 as a member of WWI French military mission; opposes French anti-Soviet intervention; joins French Communist Group in Russia along with Serge, BODY, SADOUL. Translator for Soviets. Marries Serge's sister-in-law JENNY RUSSAKOVA and remains in Russia for 15 years. Translates Dostoevsky, TOLSTOY. Leaves for Paris March 4, 1933, bearing Serge's "Declaration" to be published on his arrest, which occurs on March 8. Appointed professor of the School of Oriental Languages, later Sorbonne. Memoirs: *Mon journal de Russie* (four volumes). Jenny Russakova-Pascal and her entourage were critical of Serge after 1936, apparently holding him responsible for the sufferings of the remaining RUSSAKOV family members in the USSR, who were held hostage by Stalin (along with Serge's novels) to ensure his "good

behavior" after his release. (In fact he held his fire for some months, until the Moscow Trial exploded.)

Pasha, Enver (1881–1922): Turkish Minister of War in 1913; opposed the Kemalist revolution and fled to Russia in 1918.

Pasternak, Boris (1890–1960): Major Soviet Russian poet (*Themes and Variations*), later a novelist. Serge, a colleague, recalled Pasternak's fear of arrest, his courage in complaining to Stalin of censorship (with MAYAKOVSKY, GORKY, and others); understood his silence about the "Serge affair" at the 1935 Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture. His 1958 Nobel Prize after the unauthorized publication of *Doctor Zhivago* abroad (1957) angers the Russian authorities.

Paz, Magdeleine (1889–1973): French anti-Stalinist journalist and human rights activist; feminist/anticolonialist novelist; visits Moscow in 1920; marries Maurice Paz, lawyer and early French CP leader (later Trotskyist); friend and supporter of Serge through both of his periods of confinement in the Soviet Union, leads successful "free Serge" campaign from 1933 to 1936.

Péguy, Charles (1873–1914): Radical Catholic French poet and essayist often cited by Serge. Pro-Dreyfus, Socialist, enemy of hypocrisy; influenced by Henri Bergson and ROLLAND; later a nationalist. Killed at the front in WWI.

Petrichenko, Stepan Maximovich (1892–1946?): Leader of the Kronstadt Revolt, after which he escaped to Finland. There he joined pro-Soviet émigré groups, and got into trouble with the authorities during WWII on account of these sympathies. He was repatriated to Russia in 1945 and immediately imprisoned there. He died in jail in 1946 or '47.

Pilnyak, Boris (1894–1938): Soviet Russian novelist, non-Party member. Close friend of and important influence on Serge. Educated, begins publishing in 1915, displaced by Revolution, wanders countryside. Pilnyak's writings interest GORKY and LUNACHARSKY; publishes major novel of the Revolution, *Naked Year* (1920), that was criticized by TROTSKY; in a 1924 article Serge praises its kaleidoscopic, modernist, earthy, collage style, prefiguring his own. Author of "The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon" (1926), dealing with the touchy theme of FRUNZE's death after an operation (ordered by Stalin); *Red Wood* (1929); *The Volga Falls into the Caspian Sea* (1930), a novel on the Five-Year Plan. Travels Europe, Asia, the US; maintains relative independence to 1935. Arrested for Trotskyism in 1937; later shot.

Pivert, Marceau (1895–1958): Prominent Left militant in French Socialist Party and teachers' unions. Graduates from prestigious École Normale;

seriously wounded in 1916. Joins Socialists and leads the French Socialist Party's revolutionary Left caucus (1934–38). Founds the Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party in 1938 as a Left breakaway. Spends WWII in Mexico, founds French Cultural Institute of Latin America. Active with Serge, GORKÍN, GIRONELLA, MALAQUAIS, and other exiles in anti-Stalinist Socialismo y Libertad group. Believes the end of WWII will bring revolution. Returns to France in 1946 and reenters French Socialist Party as an executive member but loses his position because of his opposition to the Party's complicity in the Algerian war.

Plisnier, Charles (1896–1952): Belgian poet, essayist, novelist (*Faux passeports*, Prix Goncourt, 1937) and former Communist militant; expelled from the CP in 1928 as a Trotskyist; subsequently turned exclusively to literary work. Struggled to free Serge and obtain him a Belgian visa in 1936.

Poderevskaya-Frolova, Vera Mikhailovna (1856–1907?): Serge's mother, Russian anti-Tsarist feminist intellectual. Born in the ancient market city of Nizhni-Novgorod (later Gorky) to educated petty nobility of Polish extraction and liberal leanings: father well-read, connected with youthful Pechkov (future Maxim GORKY). Marries rising St. Petersburg bank official Vladimir Frolov (1878) and moves to the capital of radical Russian intelligentsia alive with Socialist and feminist activity. Described as a teacher and Socialist. Raises daughters ELENA FROLOVA and VERA FROLOVA. Stifled by St. Petersburg atmosphere of reaction and repression after 1881 assassination of Tsar, Poderevskaya gains permission from her rich and civilized husband (apparently an art collector) to travel to Switzerland with her two eldest daughters to study and for a TB cure. In Geneva, center of radical Russian student circles, Poderevskaya takes up with LEONID KIBALCHICH, a "dashing" (Kiev police description) revolutionary, ex-soldier, and scholar with legendary name. Abandons husband, taking her daughters with her. Nomadic family existence (Brussels, Liège, London, Canterbury, Brussels). Separates from Kibalchich (bigamist) after 15 years. Ill with TB, leaves Liège around 1906 and dies in Tiflis (Georgia) a year or so after. Serge inherited her love of great literature and her aristocratic manners; in Mexico he lived under his mother's maiden name, Poderevsky.

Pollak, Oscar (1893–1963): Journalist for the SECOND INTERNATIONAL and the Austrian Socialist Party (Brussels 1936–38, Paris 1938–40); executive member of the Austrian Socialist Party.

Pouget, Émile (1860–1932): Brilliant journalist, editor of the explosive anarchist journal *Le Père Peinard*, then of the CGT organ *Voix du peuple*; organizer, pamphleteer, and advocate of the eight-hour day. With

YVETÔT and GRIFFUELHES dominated the French trade union scene around 1905.

POUM (Partido obrera de unificacion marxista): Spanish anti-Stalinist revolutionary organization based mainly in Catalonia; took active part in anti-Franco struggle; violently repressed as "Trotsky Fascists" under Stalin's orders in 1937. Survived in prison and exile. The Unified Marxist Workers' Party was founded in 1935 by the fusion of two groups that had split away from the CP: NIN's Left Communist group and MAURÍN's Workers' and Peasants' Bloc. TROTSKY strongly criticized the POUM, which did not follow his tactical advice. Nin was briefly Minister of Justice in Catalonia at the outset of the Civil War, and the POUM sent volunteer military units to the front, famously described by George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*. In May 1937, elite Communist troops were sent to take over the Barcelona Telephone Exchange which, like the trams and other public services, was being run by its workers—mostly members of the CNT (anarcho-syndicalists) and the POUM. The workers were able to defend themselves and still held the city when the CNT and POUM leaders agreed to an armistice and ordered them to lay down their arms. Thereupon the POUM was outlawed, its paper *La Batalla* suppressed, its leaders arrested, tortured (to death in the case of Nin), and subjected to a Moscow-style show trial with the complicity of the Spanish Republican government—a fate which Serge, emerging from the USSR, had warned Nin about a year earlier. Serge was the wheelhorse of a successful international campaign to save the POUM defendants' lives, and they were able to escape from prison in the chaos of Republican Spain's defeat in 1939 (only to be placed in French concentration camps, from which they also escaped). The first post–Civil War meeting of the POUM Executive took place in Serge's Paris apartment. GORKÍN, the former editor of *La Batalla* who felt he owed his life to Serge, made his way to Mexico, where, in 1941, he succeeded in rescuing Serge from Fascist Europe. After Franco died, the POUM was revived in Spain by its surviving veterans; later morphed into the Andrés Nin Foundation.

Preobrazhensky, Evgeni (1886–1937): Old Bolshevik, supports LENIN in 1917; major Soviet economist. Co-author with BUKHARIN of *The ABC of Communism*. Co-leader with TROTSKY and RADEK of Left Opposition, against Bukharin-Stalin theory of "socialism in a single country." During NEW ECONOMIC POLICY proposes gradual industrialization though taxation of peasantry to feed workers to manufacture industrial goods to exchange for grain ("primitive socialist accumulation"). Expelled by Stalin in 1927, who then in 1928 imposes

accelerated "primitive socialist accumulation" through brutal forced industrialization and forced collectivization (the Five-Year Plans). Abjures his Trotskyism to work in industrialization. Arrested in 1937, refuses to "confess," shot without trial.

Princip, Gavrilo (1894–1918): Bosnian Serb nationalist student; his assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo is said to have sparked WWI. Spared the death penalty on account of his age and died in jail of TB in April 1918.

Radek, Karl Bernardovich (1885–1939): International Communist revolutionary. Active in Polish, then German Social-Democratic movements; joins LENIN in Zurich in 1914; leaves for Russia with him in famous "sealed train" but stops in Sweden before returning to Russia after the October Revolution. Agitator in Germany in 1920. COMINTERN functionary. Plays a role in failed 1923 German Communist uprising. Co-leader with TROTSKY and PREOBRAZHENSKY of internationalist Left Opposition (versus Bukharin-Stalin theory of "socialism in a single country"). Expelled from Party in 1927, readmitted in 1930. Tried for treason (second Moscow Trial of the 17 in 1937), confesses and implicates close friend BUKHARIN and others; spared death. Murdered by NKVD agents in labor camp. Famous for his jokes.

Rakosi, Mathias (1892–1971): Hungarian Communist leader. With KUN Commissar in short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic of Workers' Councils (1919); refugee in Moscow; COMINTERN secretariat (1922); returns to Hungary in 1924; in Moscow during WWII. Rigid Stalinist. Imposed on underground leaders as head of postwar Hungarian CP; takes over government in 1949; overthrown by revolution of Hungarian Workers' Councils in 1956; dies in exile in the USSR.

Rakovsky, Christian (1873–1941): Internationalist revolutionary (Bulgaria, Romania, Russia) and Soviet diplomat. Lifelong TROTSKY friend and collaborator. Organizes Balkan Social-Democratic parties; joins Zimmerwald Socialist antiwar group in 1916; joins Russian BOLSHEVIKS in 1917. Founding member of COMINTERN, agitator in Balkans. Co-leader with Trotsky, RADEK, and PREOBRAZHENSKY of internationalist Left Opposition (versus Bukharin-Stalin theory of "socialism in a single country"). Labels Stalinism "bureaucratic centrism." Expelled in 1927, sent into internal exile, reinstated in 1935; sentenced to 20 years at third Moscow Trial of the 21 in 1938. Shot on order of Stalin along with 150 imprisoned Bolsheviks and other political prisoners as Hitler invades the USSR.

Las Ramblas: Barcelona's broad tree-shaded boulevard and pedestrian

promenade with its kiosks and markets, which descends from the new quarters to the harbor.

Rappoport, Charles (1865–1941): Russian revolutionary and French Socialist. Member of NARODNAYA VOLYA; after settling in France in 1887, active in the French Socialist movement, founder-member of the French CP (1920); resigns from the CP after the show trials of Old Bolsheviks, many of whom he had known personally.

Ravachol (François Koenigstein) (1859–1892): Set off bombs in the homes of two officials connected with a recent anarchist trial; guillotined in 1892.

Reclus, Élisée (1830–1905): French geographer (*Man and the Earth*) and anarchist theoretician; member of FIRST INTERNATIONAL. Banished to Belgium after the suppression of the Paris Commune.

Reed, John (1887–1920): American journalist and radical agitator; early Communist. Wealthy Seattle family, Harvard (Socialist Club), Greenwich Village bohemian, muckraking journalism in *Masses*, organizes INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD Paterson Strike Pageant. Major eyewitness reports of Rockefeller massacre of Colorado miners (1913), Pancho Villa (*Insurgent Mexico*, 1914), and the October Revolution in Russia (*October: Ten Days That Shook the World*, 1919; later a Sergei Eisenstein film). Returns to US to found CP. Dies of typhus in Moscow after return from Eastern Peoples' Conference in Baku, buried in Kremlin wall. Subject of the film *Reds*.

Regler, Gustav (1898–1963): German novelist and former Communist; political Commissar with the International Brigades in Spain; friend of Hemingway and Koestler, broke with the Party in 1939; Serge's companion in exile in Mexico; later a pacifist. Memoir: *The Owl of Minerva*.

Rictus, Jehan (1867–1933): French poet famous for his works in popular language; his *Soliloques du pauvre* are spoken in the character of a homeless *clochard*. Young Serge published an article in 1908 praising his poetry.

Rips, Mikhail: Member of Russian MAXIMALIST Party; tried and acquitted in Paris in June 1910.

Roland-Holst, Henriette (1869–1952): Dutch Tribunist (one of the founders of the left-wing paper *De Tribune*, 1907) and then Communist, founded a short-lived Independent CP in 1924; later became a Christian Socialist and forsook militant politics for poetry; doyenne of Dutch literature for many years.

Rolland, Romain (1886–1944): French novelist (*Jean Christophe*) and essayist (Nobel Prize 1915). Passionate humanist, art and music lover; influenced by Tolstoyan pacifism. In Geneva at the outbreak of WWI, he publishes pacifist pamphlets under the title *Above the Battle*. Initially

hostile to the BOLSHEVIK Revolution, he is criticized by Serge for his neutrality. He later becomes major supporter of Stalin's USSR and the husband of a Russian loyal to Stalin. Solicited by his friends to help Serge after the latter's arrest in 1933, Rolland agrees to receive the manuscripts of Serge's novels, written in Orenburg, which are "lost" in the post office. In 1935 he visits the Kremlin and intercedes for Serge, whose case Stalin agrees to review. While in the Kremlin, Rolland also reads the manuscript of Serge's confiscated novel, but instead of taking it back to France, returns it to NKVD chief Yagoda, whom he considers "saintly."

Rosenthal, Gérard (1903–1992): Lawyer and author. Editor of surrealist publication *Oeuf dur* (1924–25) and *Clarté*. Invited to Moscow (with NAVILLE) for 10th anniversary of Soviet Revolution, introduced by Serge to TROTSKY, PREOBRAZHENSKY; joins French Left Opposition, soon expelled from French CP; Trotsky's French lawyer (*Avocat de Trotski*). Joins WWII Maquis and Sartre's Rassemblement Démocratique et Révolutionnaire after the war.

Rosmer, Alfred (1877–1964): French revolutionary syndicalist. Son of French Communard refugees, born in New York. At 16, worker and syndicalist organizer. Internationalist during WWI; delegate and Executive member of the Communist International (1920–21); prominent in the French CP until his expulsion as an Oppositionist in 1924. Supporter of the Left Opposition abroad and friend of TROTSKY and Serge in exile. Author of books on working-class and Communist history (*Le mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre*, *Lenin's Moscow*).

Rosselli, Carlo (1899–1937): Italian Socialist intellectual and politician (*Liberal Socialism*, 1929); student of SALVEMINI, persecuted anti-Fascist; exiled to France in 1929, active in Salvemini's Giustizia e Libertà. Serge exposed in *La Wallonie* the double murder of Rosselli and his brother Nello by Mussolini's agents in France.

Roy, Manabendra Nath (1887–1954): Indian revolutionary, early founder of Mexican and Indian Communist parties. Serge is not altogether accurate on Roy's career. For example, Roy was expelled in 1929 as the result of his support for the Brandler group in Germany, and never again achieved any prominence in the Indian CP. He did, however, think highly of Stalin even in later years. Roy died in 1954, an editor by then of his magazine *The Radical Humanist*. The "unpleasant suspicions" mentioned by Serge probably arose from Roy's campaigning for Indian independence on German subsidies during WWI.

Russakov, Alexander Ivanovich (Josselevich) (1874–1934): Serge's father-

in-law; Russian Jewish anarchist worker (tailor, cleaner, hatmaker). Combats anti-Semitic gangs of Black Hundreds in Jewish quarter, Rostov-on-Don (1904 or 1905); flees Russia pursued by the Tsarist police with wife, Olga Grigorievna; two young boys, Joseph and Marcel; and five beautiful daughters: Esther, ANITA, Eugenia, Rachel, and LIUBA, the eldest. Tall and handsome, passionate, naïve, full of strength and dignity, struggles against despair and manages to keep his ever increasing family together while refusing to compromise his anarchist convictions. The Russakovs wander the slums and seaports of the world from Hamburg to New York to Buenos Aires to Barcelona, settling in Marseille (1908), where the anarchist's family home is home away from home for Russian sailors during WWI. Interned along with Dr. NIKOLAYENKO for agitating among sailors of Russian warships. Exchanged as hostage in 1919; in Petrograd briefly manages Hotel Europe, later a laundry; with Serge and family inhabits large apartment on Jeliabova Street, later divided up and collectivized. Hosts attempts by American anarchists GOLDMAN and BERKMAN to mediate Kronstadt conflict in 1921. In 1929, Russakov and his family were the target of a concerted Communist campaign, collectively accused of the "brutal beating of a decorated Civil War hero, the former cavalrywoman Svirtsieva," who had come "as an envoy of the Jakt [building cooperative] to inspect some repairs in the Jeliabova St. apartment." It called for his immediate arrest and exemplary execution in the name of "proletarian opinion." In fact it was the provocateur Svirtsieva who had come to the door and slapped Liuba, already suffering from symptoms of persecution mania. The Russakovs are acquitted after an international campaign organized by Serge and their frequent guest the Romanian writer ISTRATI, who published *The Russakov Affair* in Paris. Accompanies Liuba and VLADIMIR KIBALCHICH to Orenburg.

Russakova, Anita (1906–1993): Serge's sister-in-law and occasional secretary; arrested a month after Serge on April 8, 1933, as his accomplice on a concocted espionage charge; interrogated by Rutkovsky; refuses to sign confession (contrary to Serge's assumption, it was a fake); sentenced to three months. Arrested again on Feb. 11, 1936, just prior to Serge's release; sentenced on April 10 to five years in the Gulag (Viatka); forced to walk to Far North in "my little blue shoes"; survives with courage; also deported following Serge's release were mother, Olga; sister Esther, wife of writer Daniil Kharms; brothers Marcel (musician and composer) and Joseph (sailor). Anita was liberated in 1956; later rehabilitated with help

of surviving brother and reunited with her daughter Vera in Leningrad; retained joie de vivre to the end.

Russakova, Liuba (1898–1984): Serge's second wife. Bilingual typist and stenographer. Eldest daughter of Olga and ALEXANDER RUSSAKOV (see his entry for full family history). Survives terrifying Rostov pogrom (1905); at age 20 meets Serge shipboard en route to Soviet Russia in 1919 (he called her "Bluebird"); works under LENIN as bilingual typist, stenographer at SMOLNY, COMINTERN congresses; lives in "free union" with Serge at Hotel Astoria and the Russakov apartment; gives birth to VLADIMIR KIBALCHICH in 1920. Described by Serge as "hardworking, sweet-tempered, and frank" but also "fearful, inclined to pessimism"; suffers Stalinist persecution ("Russakov affair," 1929), loses mind; briefly joins Serge in Orenburg deportation (1934); relapses, returns to Red Army mental hospital, hiding pregnancy, and gives birth to JEANNINE KIBALCHICH in 1935 but cannot care for her (frequent hysterical rages); leaves the USSR with Serge in 1936; lives on, with lucid spells, to the age 85 in mental hospital in south of France (where she had grown up and had a sister, Rachel, who had remained in Marseille).

Rykov, Alexei (1881–1938): Old Bolshevik, Soviet statesman. Participates in 1905 and 1917 Revolutions. Sides with Stalin and BUKHARIN against TROTSKY in 1924 power struggle; supports NEW ECONOMIC POLICY. Appointed nominal head of both Russian and USSR governments (1924–30); in 1930 pushed aside by Stalin along with Bukharin and the Right Opposition; Minister of Post Office (1930–36); expelled from the Party in 1937; condemned for treason along with Bukharin in third Moscow show trial and shot.

Sadoul, Jacques (1881–1956): French lawyer and Communist writer. Aide to Socialist War Minister THOMAS in 1914; captain in French Military Mission in Moscow in 1917; goes over to BOLSHEVIKS (like PASCAL, BODY). Condemned to death in absentia. With Red Army in Civil War; French delegate to 2nd COMINTERN Congress in 1920; works for Comintern Executive; returns to France, joins French CP, writes conformist articles for *Izvestia* and *L'Humanité* where he slanders Serge, whom TROTSKY defends (1936).

Salvat: Character in Zola's novel *Paris* based on anarchist bomber VAILLANT.

Salvemini, Gaetano (1873–1957): Italian historian and independent deputy (1919–21); anti-Fascist exiled after the rise of Mussolini; at Harvard University from 1934 to 1948.

Samson, J.-P. (1894–1964): Poet and translator; a Socialist militant in the years before WWI; upon the outbreak of war in 1914 chose exile in Zurich, where he subsequently lived; editor of the independent review *Témoins*.

Sapronov, Timofey (1887–1937): Russian revolutionary. Housepainter, joins BOLSHEVIKS in 1912; active in Revolutions of 1917 and Civil War. Leader of far-left Democratic Centralist group opposed to bureaucratic Party domination of Soviets (1919); participates in antibureaucratic 1923 Opposition, then TROTSKY's Left Opposition and later United Opposition (with ZINOVIEV group); forms independent Group of 15 in 1927. Considers the USSR a "State capitalist" society, not a "workers' state" to be defended. Continues oppositional activity in Verkneuralsk Isolator. Sentenced to death and shot.

Savinkov, Boris Victorovich (1879–1925): SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY leader and bold terrorist; organizer of assassination attempts on Grand Duke Sergei and Vice Minister von Plehve, betrayed by Azev, Social-Revolutionary terrorist chief and Okhrana double agent. Arrested in 1906, escapes. Author of two novels. Returns in 1917, briefly Assistant War Minister under KERENSKY. Combats BOLSHEVIKS in Civil War; organizes Russian brigade in support of Pilsudsky's Poles in Russo-Polish War (1920). Returns to Russia in 1924, lured by CHEKA; condemned to death. Sentence communed to ten years. Commits "suicide" in prison. Serge was fascinated by his psychological character.

Schmierer, Paul (1905–1966): French physician; Socialist militant since 1922; secretary of the Aid Committee for the Spanish Revolution (1936–39), where he met Serge; as organizer for FRY's American Relief Committee in Marseilles (1940–44) assisted in Serge's escape; resistance leader.

Seguí, Salvador ("Sugar Boy") (1890–1923): Spanish anarcho-syndicalist, first secretary of CNT, leader of 1917 Barcelona uprising. Serge depicted him under the name of "Dario" in his 1930 novel *Birth of Our Power*. Assassinated by antiunion thugs.

Séjourné, Laurette (Laura Valentini) (1911–2000): Serge's third wife; an ethnologist and archaeologist of Mexico. Born in Perugia, Italy; works in French film industry, meets Serge in Paris in 1937; survives exodus with Serge, VLADIMIR KIBALCHICH, and MOLINS Y FÁBREGA; sojourns at Villa Air-Bel, Marseille, with Serge, Vladimir Kibalchich, the Bretons, and FRY (1940–41). Joins Serge in Mexico, bringing his daughter JEANNINE KIBALCHICH. Helps support Serge while

working and studying Mexican archaeology. Widowed, marries Argentinean publisher Arnaldo Orfila Reynal, moves in pro-Communist Latin American circles. Publishes books on Nahan cosmology and Quetzalcoatl.

Sembat, Marcel (1862–1922): Revolutionary Socialist initially, then a leader of the French Socialist Party and member of the Cabinet of National Defense during WWI.

Séverac, Jean-Baptiste (1879–1951): Old Socialist and cooperative activist; editor in chief of *L'Humanité* up to 1918, then of *Le Populaire*.

Shatov, Bill (Vladimir Sergueivich) (1887–1937): Russian-American revolutionary syndicalist. Joins Russian Social-Democrats in 1903, emigrates to US in 1907, joins INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD and leads its Russian section; returns to Russia after February Revolution, elected to Executive Committee of Petrograd factory committees; delegate of Union of Anarcho-Syndicalists to the Revolutionary Military Committee which directs October Revolution. Military commander of Petrograd revolutionary defense (April 1919); Red Army commander during Civil War. In 1920 one of the organizers and ministers of the Far East Republic. Economic functions (1921–). Arrested in 1937 and shot.

Shliapnikov, Alexander Gavrilovich (1885–1937): Old Bolshevik; leader of 1920 Workers' Opposition. Social-Democrat from 1901; BOLSHEVIK in 1903; Petersburg Party Committee (1907), Central Committee (1914); leader in Petrograd Soviet during the February Revolution, member of Military Revolutionary Committee directing the October Revolution. Commissar of Labor in first Soviet cabinet, favors coalition government. Organizes defense on several Civil War fronts. From 1920 leader of Pan-Russian Metal Workers' Union and (with KOLLONTAI) of 1920–22 Workers' Opposition in Trade Union debate: favors union management of economy, as opposed to TROTSKY's "militarization" of labor. Central Committee candidate member (1918–19), then full member (1921–22); opposes Party policy but does not unite with Trotskyists in 1923–24. Works in publishing, diplomacy (France), and state planning (1932). Expelled in 1933, exiled. Arrested in 1935 and again in 1937; shot.

Smilga, Ivar Tenissovitch (1892–1937): Born in Latvia, son of executed revolutionary, BOLSHEVIK since 1907, participates in October Revolution and 1918 ill-fated Finnish Revolution. Member of Central Committee (1917–21 and 1925–27). Prominent in Left Opposition with TROTSKY, expelled in 1927, then exiled in 1928. Capitulates to Party in 1929, reinstated in 1930. Head of Plan in Central Asia. Arrested in 1935, shot.

Smirnov, Ivan Nikitich (1881–1936): Old Bolshevik. Socialist from 1899, participates in 1905 Revolution. After February Revolution, among leaders of Tomsk Soviet, directs Communist publishing house Volna; chair of Siberian Revolutionary Committee. Member of Party Central Committee (1920–21); Commissar of Soviet Post and Telegraph (1923–27). From 1923 among leaders of Left Opposition; expelled in 1927, exiled in 1928, capitulates in 1929, reinstated in 1930. Leads a clandestine group of secret Trotskyists which makes contact with TROTSKY in 1931. Arrested and sentenced to three years in 1933. Condemned to death at first Moscow Trial (1936).

Smirnov, Vladimir Mikhailovich (1887–1937): BOLSHEVIK from 1907, economist. Among leaders of October Revolution; Soviet Commissar of Commerce and Industry; Left Communist, resigned in protest against Brest-Litovsk Treaty (1918). Commands division in Civil War; one of the leaders of 1919 military opposition; later of Democratic Socialism group (1920–21); then of 1923 Left Opposition. Expelled in 1926 for "fractional activity," then reinstated. Leads Group of 15 (with SAPRONOV) and co-author of its platform. Expelled again in 1927; exile, prison; shot.

Smolny Institute: Classic Palladian edifice in St. Petersburg built to house a school for girls of the nobility. Used by LENIN and BOLSHEVIKS as headquarters in October Revolution and later as seat of Leningrad CP.

Social-Revolutionary Party (SRs): Extremely influential from the 1890s through the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the SRs inherited the traditions of the earlier Populists (NARODNIKS), both in their efforts to combine the aspirations of Russia's vast peasantry with those of the new industrial proletarian and in the use of individual terrorism to advance their cause. Terrorism became controversial in 1906, when the pro-terror MAXIMALISTS split off; and in 1908, when Azev, the leader of the SR combat organization, was revealed as an Okhrana (Tsarist secret police) agent. WWI provoked further divisions between patriotic and internationalist antiwar elements. In Feb. 1917, the majority (Right) SRs participated in KERENSKY's pro-Allied Provisional Government, while in Oct., the Left SRs joined with the BOLSHEVIKS in the first Soviet Government (which in effect implemented the SRs' program by giving land to the peasants). The SRs held a majority of elected seats in the Constituent Assembly, but it was dispersed by the Bolsheviks in Jan. 1918. Later in 1918, many Left SRs broke with the Bolsheviks over the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany and reverted to terror-

ism with Dora Kaplan's attempted assassination of LENIN. SRs fought on both sides in the Civil War between Reds and Whites.

Sorel, Georges (1847–1922): Engineer, sociologist, theoretician of revolutionary syndicalism. His *Reflections on Violence* (1908) rejected parliamentarism and stressed the role of the political "myth" of the general strike to galvanize the masses. His voluntarism is said to have inspired both Communists and Fascists.

Souvarine, Boris (Lifschitz) (1895–1964): Marxist scholar, journalist, and militant of Ukrainian origin, naturalized French. Born in Kiev, moved to France. Self-educated worker, later a journalist; founding member of the French CP (1920), member of COMINTERN Executive (1921). Pushes French CP from Left (1923); re-launches TROTSKY's *New Course* in France; expelled in 1924. Publishes anti-Stalinist *Bulletin communiste* (1925); co-founds Democratic Communist Circle, which publishes *Critique Sociale* with Raymond Queneau, Georges Bataille, LAURAT, and LEFEUVRE. Hostile to Serge in later years.

Spartakists or **Spartacus League** (German: Spartakusbund): Left-wing Marxist revolutionary movement organized in Germany during WWI. Named after Spartacus, leader of the Roman slave rebellion. Founded by LIEBKNECHT, LUXEMBURG, ZETKIN, and others who split with pro-war Socialists. Renamed itself the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) in Dec. 1918; joins COMINTERN in 1919. Active promoting Workers' Councils during the German Revolution of 1918. Put down in Jan. 1919 by Ebert's Social-Democratic government after an unsuccessful uprising; its leaders are murdered.

Stinnes, Hugo (1870–1924): German industrialist who put his enormous fortune at the service of nationalist interests; a power behind the press, most of which was controlled by him, and in the general economy.

Stirner, Max (1806–1856): German anarchist philosopher, author of *The Ego and His Own* (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, 1844); like Marx, with whom he polemicized, Stirner was a Young Hegelian.

Stuchka, Peter Ivanovich (1865–1932): A founder of the Latvian Marxist movement, an early BOLSHEVIK, People's Commissar for Justice (1917–18), and later a prominent Soviet jurist.

Suritz, Yakov (1882–1952): Soviet Diplomat. Ex-MENSHEVIK whose sympathies appear to have been genuinely liberal; active in many diplomatic posts abroad; ambassador to France in 1930s; declared persona non grata by the French government for an embassy telegram to Stalin in which Britain and France were denounced as "warmongers" in 1940; ambassador to Brazil (1946–47).

Thaelmann, Ernst (1866–1944): Leader of the German CP after its Stalinization; Reichstag deputy (1924–33); arrested in 1933 and murdered at the end of the war in a concentration camp.

Thomas, Albert (1878–1932): French WWI Minister of Munitions; visited Russia after the February Revolution in an attempt to arouse enthusiasm for the Allies.

Tolstoy, Alexei (1883–1945): Russian, Soviet writer. Hereditary count; early literary successes. Fights in White Army in Civil War; after defeat of Wrangel's army emigrates to Paris, later to Berlin. Returns to Russia in 1922, denounces White emigrations; more literary successes, historical novels (*Peter the Great*), praises Stalin. Investigates WWII Nazi genocide and participates in Nuremberg prosecutions.

Torgsin: During the famines of the early 1930s, when Soviet farmers were dying or fleeing to the cities, food and other commodities could be bought in special state-run hard-currency stores, called *Torgsins*, for currency, gold, silver, or other valuables. The very small royalties from Serge's books published in France, converted into *Torgsin* rubles, enabled him and VLADIMIR KIBALCHICH to survive in deportation in Orenburg.

Trotsky, Leon Davidovich (Bronstein) (1879–1940): Russian revolutionary, journalist, statesman, military leader, theoretician, historian (see *Life and Death of Leon Trotsky* by Serge and Natalia Sedova Trotsky). Educated son of comfortable Jewish peasants. Early revolutionary struggles, prison, exile (1896–1902); writes for LENIN's *Iskra*; sides with MENSHEVIKS in 1903 split with BOLSHEVIKS, later independent Social-Democrat trying to reunite factions (1904–17); develops theory of permanent revolution (with Parvus). Elected president of the Petersburg Soviet during 1905 Revolution; imprisoned, escapes, emigrates: Vienna, Switzerland, Paris, New York (1906–17); internationalist during WWI (Zimmerwald Conference, 1915; Kienthal, 1916). With group of followers, rejoins Lenin and Bolsheviks in 1917 Revolution, directs October Revolution; first Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, negotiates peace with Germany (Brest-Litovsk, 1918); founder and head of victorious Red Army during Civil War; crushes Makhnovist anarchist movement in Ukraine; reorganizes transportation system (1920–21); advocates militarization of labor in factional dispute with Lenin (moderate) and Workers' Opposition (far left) over role of trade unions (1920–21); orders suppression of Kronstadt rebels (1921); pushed aside by Stalin and his allies (BUKHARIN, ZINOVIEV, Kamenev) during Lenin's final illness (1922–24); with Left Opposition criticizes Party bureaucracy, opposes Bukharin-

Stalin nationalist theory of "socialism in a single country," advocates industrialization and democratization; United Opposition with Zinoviev (1926); expelled and deported by Stalin (1927); exiled to Prinkipo Island (Turkey), France, Norway, and Mexico, where he is assassinated by Stalin's agent. Founder of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. Prolific writer: *Permanent Revolution, Literature and Revolution, History of the Russian Revolution, The Revolution Betrayed, Fascism, My Life.*

Turati, Filippo (1857–1932): Founder and leader of Italian reformist Socialism; opposed Italian involvement in WWI; extremely anti-Communist; after 1926 an exile in Corsica and then France.

Uritsky, Mikhail S. (1873–1918): BOLSHEVIK since 1917 and member of the Revolutionary Military Committee that directed the October Revolution; Left Communist in 1918; chairman of the Petrograd CHEKA at the time of his murder by a SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY.

Vaillant, Auguste (1861–1894): French anarchist. Throws nail bomb in Chamber of Deputies, injuring 50 (1893). The deputies, panicked, pass strict security laws (Les lois scélérates) depriving anarchists, radicals, and others of rights. Guillotined despite appeals for clemency.

Vaillant-Couturier, Paul (1892–1937): French Communist poet, novelist, journalist, politician. Memorialist of WWI, which turns him into a pacifist and a Socialist; in 1919 founds antiwar veterans' league and with fellow war novelist Henri Barbusse launches *Clarté*—the review to which Serge regularly contributes political and cultural articles from Russia and later from Germany until 1928. Popular orator, elected Socialist deputy in 1919; co-founder of French CP with SOUVARINE and LONGUET in 1920 split with Socialists. Reelected as Communist in 1924; conforms to the Party line, immensely popular; holds Party and government office (mayor and deputy from Villejuif) until his untimely death. Blackballs Serge's continued collaboration to *Clarté* and attempts to block discussion of Serge's arrest at Communist-sponsored Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture in 1935.

Valet, René (1892–1912): French anarcho-individualist "illegalist"; sensitive, well-read; arrives in Belgium as teenage anarchist draft refuser, joins Brussels Revolutionary Group. Part of BONNOT GANG; killed along with GARNIER in full-scale police siege of their suburban hideout in May 1912, aged 20.

Valois, Georges (Alfred Gressent) (1878–1945): French writer; first an anarchist and organizer of the first bookshop assistants' union (1903); subsequently a leader of Action Française and founder of the first French

Fascist movement (Les Faisceaux, 1925–28); later reverted to a left-wing, anti-state position. A prolific writer through his various phases, Valois died in a Nazi concentration camp.

Vandervelde, Émile (1866–1938): Belgian Socialist leader, prominent in the SECOND INTERNATIONAL; entered the cabinet during WWI. Foreign Minister (1925–27). In 1936 he used his influence to help obtain a Belgian visa for Serge and his family.

Verhaeren, Émile (1855–1916): French-language Belgian poet. Influenced by Symbolism; strong social conscience; lyrical evocations of great cities, modernity, labor; admired by Serge.

Vidal, Germinal (1913–1936): Activist in Spanish labor movement. Leader of Iberian Young Communists in the early 1930s, then member of POUM Central Committee. Killed in combat against the pro-Franco rebels in Barcelona.

Vlahov, Dimitar (1878–1953): Leading Macedonian Communist and COMINTERN delegate. After 1934 he took refuge in the Soviet Union; in 1943 emerged as a partisan leader with Tito, with special responsibility for Yugoslav Macedonia; died in 1953 as vice president of Yugoslavia.

Voline (Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eichenbaum) (1882–1945): Russian anarchist. SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY (1905–11), then anarchist. Emigrates in 1908. Antimilitarist in 1914, held in French camp in 1916. Returns to Russia in 1917; becomes a leader in the Petrograd Union of Anarcho-Syndicalist Propaganda, edits *Golos Truda* (Labor's Voice). In Aug. 1919 joins MAKHNO's army in the Ukraine; becomes ideological spokesman of Makhnovist movement, leads its Revolutionary Military Committee. Arrested by the BOLSHEVIKS in 1920, allowed to emigrate in 1922. Anarchist activist in Marseille, historian of Makhnovism (*The Unknown Revolution, 1917–1927*).

Volodarsky, V. (1891–1918): BOLSHEVIK orator and Petrograd Commissar of Press, Propaganda, and Agitation. Assassinated by a SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY terrorist in June 1918.

Werth, Léon (1878–1955): Anticolonialist French novelist; friend of Serge during the late 1930s. Writes seminal 1951 preface to Serge's *Tulayev*.

Wijnkoop, David (1876–1941): Dutch Tribunist (one of the founders of the left-wing paper *De Tribune*, 1907), then Left Social-Democrat and Communist. Tried to set up an abortive semiautonomous Communist center in Amsterdam in 1920; formed an opposition outside the Party (1926–30), then returned to orthodoxy.

Wullens, Maurice (1894–1945): French schoolteacher, Left pacifist. Pub-

lisher of periodical *Les Humbles* (1913–39) for which Serge wrote. Briefly a Communist in early 1920s. Fights for Serge's liberation and joins his Committee for the Defense of Free Opinion in the Revolution. Serge criticized his defeatism in 1938.

Yesenin, Sergei (1895–1925): Bohemian lyric poet influenced by Symbolism and Imagism; later enjoyed great popularity and a famous love affair with Isadora Duncan before committing suicide.

Yevdokimov, Grigory Yeremeievitch (1884–1936): Old Bolshevik. President of Soviet of Petrograd Trade Unions in 1920s. Secretary of Party Central Committee and member of its Orgburo (1926–27). From 1925 one of the leaders of Leningrad Opposition, then of United Opposition. Expelled in 1927; capitulates in 1928 and rejoins. Expelled after the KIROV assassination and sentenced to eight years. Condemned to death at first Moscow Trial (1936).

Yvetôt, Georges (1868–1942): Secretary of the trade union Labor Exchanges from 1901, an antimilitarist, and author of *L'ABC syndicaliste.* With GRIFFUELHES and POUGET leader of French syndicalism around 1905.

Zetkin, Clara (1857–1933): Pioneer German feminist, Marxist activist. Close friend of LUXEMBURG in left wing of German Social-Democracy; joins SPARTAKISTS during WWI; Communist Reichstag deputy (1920–33). Dies in Moscow.

Zinoviev, Grigory (1883–1936): Old Bolshevik and LENIN's companion in exile. On the eve of the October Revolution he and Kamenev publicly criticized the BOLSHEVIKS in protest against this "adventure." President of the THIRD INTERNATIONAL, the "boss" to whom Serge reported throughout his years in the Comintern Press Services (1919–26). Serge's physical and psychological portrait of Zinoviev here and in *Conquered City* reveals a would-be demagogue whose ruthlessness is a compensation for his irresolution. Joins with Stalin as early as 1922 to slander and destroy TROTSKY, only to find himself persecuted in turn. In 1926 joins forces with Trotsky's Left Opposition but their United Opposition is crushed by Stalin in 1927. Zinoviev then "capitulated" to Stalin, who played cat and mouse with him. Shot after "confessing" to incredible "crimes" at first Moscow Trial.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF SERGE'S WORK

FICTION

Birth of Our Power (*Naissance de notre force*, 1930). Translated by Richard Greeman. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967; London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1968; Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1970; London and New York: Writers & Readers, 1977. From Barcelona to Petersburg, the conflagration of World War I ignites the spark of revolution and poses a new problem for the revolutionaries: power.

The Case of Comrade Tulayev (*L'Affaire Toulaév*, 1951). Translated by Willard Trask. With an introduction by Susan Sontag. NYRB Classics, 2007. A panorama of the USSR (and Republican Spain) during the purges, with a cast of sharply etched characters from provincial policemen to Old Bolsheviks and the Chief himself.

Conquered City (*Ville conquise*, 1932). Translated and with an introduction by Richard Greeman. NYRB Classics, 2009. Idealistic revolutionaries cope with the poison of power as the Red Terror and the White Army struggle for control of Petrograd during the Civil War.

The Long Dusk (*Les derniers temps*, 1946). Translated by Ralph Manheim. New York: The Dial Press, 1946. The fall of Paris (1940), the exodus of the refugees to the Free Zone, and the beginnings of the French Resistance.

Men in Prison (*Les hommes dans la prison*, 1930). Translated and with an introduction by Richard Greeman. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1969; London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1970; Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972; London and New York: Writers & Readers, 1977. A searing personal experience transformed into a literary creation of general import.

Midnight in the Century (*S'il est minuit dans le siècle*, 1939). Translated and with an introduction by Richard Greeman. London and New York: Writers & Readers, 1981. On the eve of the Great Purge, convicted anti-

Stalin Oppositionists in deportation attempt to survive, resist the GPU, debate political solutions, ponder their fates, and fall in love.

Unforgiving Years (*Les années sans pardon*, posthumous, 1973). Translated and with an introduction by Richard Greeman. NYRB Classics, 2010. Tormented Russian revolutionaries in Paris on the eve of World War II, Leningrad under siege, the last days of Berlin, and Mexico.

POETRY

Resistance: Poems (*Résistance*, 1938). Translated by James Brook. With an introduction by Richard Greeman. San Francisco: City Lights, 1972. Most of these poems were composed in deportation in Orenburg (1933–1936), confiscated by the GPU, and reconstructed from memory in France.

HISTORY AND POLITICS

Collected Writings on Literature and Revolution. Translated and edited by Al Richardson. London: Francis Boutle, 2004. Includes Serge's reports on Soviet cultural life in the 1920s (published in Paris in *Clarté*); studies of writers like Blok, Mayakovsky, Essenin, and Pilnyak; and highly original contributions to the debate on "proletarian literature" in the 1930s.

From Lenin to Stalin (*De Lénine à Staline*, 1937). Translated by Ralph Manheim. New York: Monad Press, 1973. A brilliant, short primer on the Russian Revolution and its degeneration, with close-ups of Lenin and Trotsky.

The Life and Death of Leon Trotsky (*Vie et mort de Léon Trotski*, 1951). With Natalia Sedova Trotsky. Translated by A. Pomeranz, 1975. Chicago: Haymarket Press, 2012. Still the most concise, authentic, and well-written Trotsky biography, based on the authors' intimate knowledge of the man and his times and on Trotsky's personal archives (before they were sealed up at Harvard).

Revolution in Danger: Writings from Russia 1919–1921. Translated by Ian Birchall. London: Redwords, 1997; Chicago: Haymarket, 2011. Serge's early reports from Russia were designed to win over his French anarchist comrades to the cause of the Soviets.

Russia Twenty Years After (*Destin d'une Revolution*, 1937). Translated by Max Shachtman. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996. Descriptive panorama and analysis of bureaucratic tyranny and chaos in

Russia under Stalin's Five Year Plans, based on statistics and economic, sociological, and political analysis. Includes the essay "Thirty Years After the Russian Revolution" (translated by Michel Bolsey, 1947).

The Serge-Trotsky Papers: Correspondence and Other Writings Between Victor Serge and Leon Trotsky. Edited by D. Cotterill. London: Pluto Press, 1994. Includes their personal letters and polemical articles as well as essays on Serge and Trotsky by various authors.

What Every Radical Should Know About State Repression: A Guide for Activists (*Les Coulisses d'une Sûreté Générale: Ce que tout révolutionnaire doit savoir de la répression*, 1926). Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2005. Popular pamphlet reprinted in a dozen languages. Serge unmasks the secrets he discovered working in the archives the Tsarist Secret Police, then explains how police provocateurs operate everywhere and gives practical advice on security.

Witness to the German Revolution (1923). Translated by Ian Birchall. London: Redwords, 1997; Chicago: Haymarket, 2011. A collection of the articles Serge wrote in Berlin in 1923 under the pseudonym R. Albert.

Year One of the Russian Revolution (*L'an I de la Révolution russe*, 1928). Translated and with an introduction by Peter Sedgwick. London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1972; London and New York: Writers & Readers, 1992; Chicago: Haymarket, 2012. Well-documented, clearly presented narrative history of the Revolution's heroic early days, movingly written, based on eyewitness-participant accounts. Composed when Serge was a disciplined member of the Russian Communist Party's Left Opposition, his interpretations (for example of the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly) express the Left-Communist ("Trotskyist") perspectives of the period.

NOT YET TRANSLATED

Carnets. With a preface by Régis Debray. Arles: Actes Sud, 1986. Notebook sketches and meditations on subjects ranging from Giroudoux and Trotsky to Mexican earthquakes, popular wrestling matches, and death.

Retour à l'Occident: Chroniques 1936–1940. With a preface by Richard Greeman. Marseille: Agone, 2010. From the euphoria of the French Popular Front in June 1936 to the defeat of the Spanish Republic, Serge's weekly columns for a trade-union-owned independent daily in Belgium provide a lucid panorama of this confused and confusing period.

Le tropique et le nord. Paris: Éditions François Maspero, 1972; Paris: La Découverte, 2003. Four short stories: "Mer blanche" (1932), "L'impasse Saint-Barnabé" (1931), "L'hôpital de Léningrad" (1953), and "Le séisme" (1972).

MANUSCRIPTS

Victor Serge Papers (1936–1947), Beinecke Library, Yale University. Twenty-seven boxes of correspondence, documents, and manuscripts (mostly unpublished) on subjects from politics to Mexican anthropology. Catalog available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.serge.

ABOUT THE IMAGES

Unless credited otherwise, the photos reprinted here are copyrighted by the Victor Serge Foundation and come from the private albums of Serge's son Vlady Kibalchich (who also contributed his artwork), his daughter Jeannine Kibalchich, his brother-in-law Pierre Pascal, and others who have been kind enough to allow me to copy them. I apologize for the low resolution of these snapshots of snapshots, made on the fly over the years with a 35mm Minolta and a close-up lens. They give the reader a window into Serge's personal life, loves, and family—topics about which the *Memoirs* rarely speak. —R.G.

INDEX

Abdul Hamid, 211
Abramovich, R. R., 152, 171, 192, 213, 254, 290, 292, 393, 451
Adad Mᶜ, 47
Adler, Friedrich, xvii 61, 193, 292, 391–2, 451
Afinogenov, 315
Alain, 370
Aleksandrov, Todor, 211
Alexander II, Tsar, 3, 324, 474, 475, 482
Aleynnikov, B. M., 140
Alfonso XIII, 33, 62
Alliluyeva, Nadezhda, 324–325
Almereyda, Miguel, 34–35, 36, 59, 60, 72, 451
Alpári, Gyula, 191
Anarchists, xxvi, 18, 40, 43, 56, 65, 71, 113, 117, 122, 145, 151, 154, 166, 170, 180, 181, 216, 260, 391, 455, 458, 471; Belgian, 16–17, 19–20; French, 18–19, 23–26, 27, 38–43, 45–50, 56, 72, 421; Russian, 18, 87, 98, 110, 127 139–43, 149–50, 157, 179, 267, 351; Spanish, 64, 65; see also CNT
Andrade, Juan, 391, 452
Andreyev, Leonid, 236
Andreyev (S.-R.), 297
Andreyeva, 359
Andreytchine, Georges, 245
Antonov (diplomat), 381
Antonov, A.S., 151
Antonov-Ovseyenko, V. A., 249, 388
Apfel, 427
Aragon, Louis, 370
Arbory-Rallé, 295
Armand, E. (Jouin), 27, 122, 452
Arnold, 279
Arquer, Jordi, 391, 452
Artamonov, 212
Artzybashev, M., 32, 452
Ascaso, Francisco, 67, 452
Askarov, G. K., 141
Astrov, 301
Atabekian, A. A., 141
Atl, Dr., 434
Avenarius, 30
Averbach, L. L., 306, 310, 315
Avrov, 108
Azev, E. F., 21, 29, 114, 301, 495, 497

Badaev, 135
Bak, 176
Bakayev, I. P., xxvii, 92, 95, 246, 248, 260, 264, 270, 452
Bakunin, M. A., 62, 82, 181, 212, 453
Balabanova, Angelica, xxv, 96, 119, 123, 164, 217, 453
Balmont, K., 32
Barakov, Dimitri, 77

Barbusse, Henri, xxv, 178, 276–77, 281, 370, 498
Barlach, Ernst, 188
Baron, Aaron, 142–43, 145, 164, 179–81, 453
Baron, Fanny, 179, 453
Bartz, 191
Basch, Victor, 387
Baskakov, N. P., 244
Bastajić, Pavle, 380
Baudouin, Paul, 415, 421
Bauer, Otto, 223, 292, 453
Bayrach, 237
Bebel, August, 14, 453–54
Belenky, Y., 372
Belinsky, V. G., 4
Beloborodov, A. G., 265, 271
Bely, Andrei, 177–78, 314, 454
Benjamin, Walter, 140, 427, 454
Benoist-Méchin, Jacques, 409–10
Berdyaev, N., 170
Bergery, Gaston, 399
Berkman, Alexander, 149, 150, 180–81, 454
Bernard, Jean-Marie, 60
Berneri, Camillo, 388
Bertillon, Alphonse, 45
Berton, Germaine, 48
Bertoni, Luigi, 18, 454
Bettauer, Hugo, 224
Blériot, Louis, 444
Bloch (sculptor), 176, 232
Bloch, Jean-Richard, 371
Blok, Alexander, 170–71, 177–78, 345, 454–55, 502
Blücher, V. K., 143, 251, 293, 455
Blum, Léon, 380, 384, 395, 403, 404, 415, 425
Blumkin, Y., 127, 217, 297–98, 299, 302
Bobrov, Ivan Yegorovich, 345, 348–49, 372
Body, Marcel, 130 n., 147, 182, 455
Bogdanov, A. A. (Malinovsky), 157, 455
Bogićević, M., 212
Bogin, 336–38
Bonnot, Jules, 39, 40, 43, 48, 456
Bonskoy, 297
Bordiga, Amadeo, 123, 125, 194, 457
Borghi, Armando, 122
Boris, Tsar, 209
Borodin, M. A., 171
Borovoy, A. A., 88
Bosch, Evgenia, 215, 228, 268
Böttcher, Paul, 200
Botticelli, 166–67
Bouley, Gaston, 319, 175
Bracke (Desrousseaux), Alexander, 292, 384
Brandler, Heinrich, 105n., 200, 202, 204, 492
Breitscheid, Rudolf, 427, 457
Breton, André, 385, 424, 426–27, 467
Brockway, Fenner, 395
Brode, André, 77
Brodsky, Isaac, 120–21
Bronstein, Alexandra, 243, 257, 283, 284, 295, 325, 338, 367
Bronstein, Nina, 243
Bronstein, Zinaida (Zina), 243, 320, 325
Broutchoux, Benoît, 14
Brunn (Ilk), 400
Brupbacher, Fritz, 370, 457
Brussilov, General, 118
Bubnov, A. S., 152, 388
Budyenny, S. M., 111, 126
Bukharin, N. I., 96, 104, 117, 119, 125, 135, 156, 158–60, 193, 205, 207, 241,

246, 247–49, 257, 262, 268–70, 293–94, 300–1, 318, 368, 391, 457–58; character, 159
Burtsev, V. L., 21
Butov, G. V., 296
Byk, I., 359–60

Cachin, Marcel, 122, 123, 195, 395, 458
Caillaux, Joseph, 72, 131, 458
Caillaux, Mme., 48
Callemin, Raymond, 9, 45, 46, 458
Campinchi, Me César, 47, 60
Canudo, Riciotto, 60
Cárdenas, Lázaro, 426
Carouy, Edouard, 20, 43, 49, 456
Caserio, Santo-Jeronimo, 51, 458
CGT (Confédération générale du Travail), 17, 20, 32, 36, 122, 130, 383, 404, 421, 458
Chadayev, V. N., 242, 244, 249, 251, 252–53, 254–55, 279, 281
Chaikovsky, N. V., 103
Challaye, Félicien, 385, 392
Chamberlain, Neville, 405
Chapayev, V. I., 355, 459
Chapelier, Emile, 16, 459
Chaulev, Peter, 211
Cheka, xiii, xxix, 70, 76, 85, 87, 92–95, 96, 100, 110, 128, 131, 138, 143, 145–46, 148, 149, 151, 152–53, 155, 169, 174, 176–80, 208, 214, 220, 236–37, 239, 264, 291, 297, 327, 374, 406, 442, 455–56, 459; massacre of January 1920, 116–17 238. See also GPU
Chekhov, 5, 236, 268
Ch'en Tu-Hsiu, 253
Chernykh, V. M., 359, 373
Chernyshevsky, N. G., 4
Chiang Kai-shek, 215, 251, 253, 455
Chicherin, G. V., 76, 140, 158, 170, 192, 297
Chorny, Lev (Turchaninov), 179
Chubar, V. Y., 261, 262
Chubarov Alley, 240–41
Chudin, 95
Churchill, Winston, xxxiv, 18, 290
Clemenceau, Georges, 14, 19, 42, 71, 72, 73, 101, 163, 459
CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo), 63, 67, 119, 122, 392, 404, 459–60
Collinet, Michel, 395, 460
Comintern. See Communist International
Communist International, i, viii, xxvii, xxv, xxviii, 96, 118, 121–29, 140, 153, 160, 194, 200, 217, 238, 246, 260, 262, 391, 441, 455; First Congress, 469; Second Congress, 118, 121, 131, 140, 458; Third Congress, 158, 180; and Germany (1923), 199–205; International Relations Section (OMS), 130, 186
Companys, Luis, 395
Crispien, Arthur, 122, 123, 460
Cuno Government, 196

Dahlem, Franz, 191
Daladier, Edouard, 404, 405, 410, 415
Dan, Theodore (Gurvich), 139 , 152, 460
Dantec, Félix le, 24, 461
Daudet, Léon, 37, 461
Dauge, Walter, 408
Däumig, Ernst, 122, 123, 461
Déat, Marcel, 425
de Fleury, Maurice, 58, 60
De Los Ríos, Fernando, 172
de Man, Henri, 411

Denikin, General, 111, 143
Dewey, John, 386
Dieudonné, Eugène, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 461
Dimitrijević, D., 212, 461
Dimitrov, G., 106n., 209
Dingelstedt, F., 243, 295
Dittmann, Wilhelm, 122, 123, 461
Dmitriev, V., 309
Dogadov, A. I., 262
Domingo, Marcelino, 64
Dommanget, Maurice, 385
Doriot, Jacques, 194, 195, 225, 461
Dormoy, Marx, 399, 402–3, 425
Dos Passos, John, 305
Dostoevsky, 242, 280, 307, 395
Draghiecescou, 222
Drobnis, Y. I., 216
Duclos, Jacques, 412
Duhamel, Georges, 305, 370, 389, 413, 461
Duneff (brothers), 60
Durruti, Buenaventura, 67, 461
Dybenko, P. E., 152
Dzerzhinsky, Felix, xxix, 94, 95, 116, 126, 127, 153, 158, 177, 238, 327, 333, 462; death, 258

Eastman, Max, 308
Eberlein, Hugo, 201
Ebert, Friedrich, 187, 203
Eckhart, Captain, 190
Ehrenburg, Ilya, 101, 370, 371, 390, 462
Eichenwald, 301
Eichhorn, Field Marshal, 297
Eismont, N., 301
Eloranta, Voyto, 129
Eltsin, B. M., 284, 295, 300, 357, 361, 372
Eltsin, V. B., 245
Emery, L., 385
Enchmen, E. S., 241
Engels, 220, 252, 291, 299
Enukkidze, Avel, 130
Enver Pasha, 127

Fan Noli, Mgr., 213
Faure, Élie, 39, 370, 462
Faure, Paul, 405, 415, 425, 462
Faure, Sébastien, 41, 48, 462
Fédération Balkanique, La, 211, 381
Fedin, Konstantin, 109, 194, 308, 463
Feinberg, Max, 77
Feodorov, 243
Ferral, Edouard, 30, 32, 35, 36
Ferrer, Francisco, 33, 34, 36, 463
Figner, Vera, 323
First International Workingmen's Association (IWA), 453, 469
Fischer, Ruth, 202
Fishelev, 260
Fouchs, Paul, 74
Fourth International, 361, 401, 406, 408, 470
Fraina, Louis C., 124, 463
France, Anatole, 16n., 20, 25, 26, 424
Franchet d'Espèrey, Louis, 402
Franco, General, 391, 392, 393, 395, 403, 409, 418, 433
Franconi, Gabriel-Tristan, 60
Freud, 220, 224, 236
Frey, Josef, 222
Fridman, Marko, 209
Frolova, Elena, xii, 381, 463
Frolova, Vera, 464
Frossard, Ludovic-Oscar, 122–23, 190, 195, 464
Frunze, M. V., 143, 222, 464
Fry, Varian, 423, 427, 493
Fuchs, Eduard, 190

Gaćinović, V., 212
Gallacher, William, 123
Galliffet, General, Marquis de, 57, 464–65
Galtier-Boissière, Jean, 385
Gandhi, 178, 369
Garnier [police officer], 42
Garnier, Octave, 38, 40, 43, 465
Gavrilenko, 143
Genghis Khan, 300
Georgiev, Gen. Kosta, 209
Gerassimov, L., 17
Gershuni, G. A., 30
Gerstein, L. N., 193, 352
Gertik, A. M., 249
Ghezzi, Francesco, 167, 319, 375, 465
Gide, André, i, xxv, 311, 370, 371, 381, 390, 475, 479
Ginsberg, A. M., 288, 293
Giraudoux, Jean, 413
Girchek, L., 372
Gironella, Enrique (Adroher), 391, 465
Glazman, 228
Goering, 414
Golberg, Mécislas, 30, 465
Goldénberg, Dr., 206
Goldman, Emma, 149, 150, 180–81, 456, 465–66
Goldstein, Dr., 213, 214
Golodied, 286
Goloschekin, F. I., 262
Gorkín, Julián (Gomez), xxxi, xxxii, xxxviii, xxxix, 391, 433, 466, 467
Gorky, Maxim (Peshkov), 15, 84–85, 88, 96, 112, 114, 115, 118, 142, 152, 164, 181, 193, 205, 307, 308, 311, 316, 374, 466
Gotz, A. R., 193, 467
GPU, 250, 259, 265, 269, 271–77 passim, 284, 290–91, 294–98 passim, 302, 311–27 passim, 329–75 passim, 380; see also Cheka
Gramsci, Antonio, xxv, 218–19, 467
Grasset, Bernard, 383, 413
Grave, Jean, 23, 59, 467
Griffuelhes, Victor, 14, 467
Groman, V. G., 288, 289, 293, 467
Grossman-Roschin, J., 141, 246
Grosz, George, 188
Grozovskaya, Lydia, 399
Guérin, Daniel, 411
Guesde, Jules, 16, 59, 467
Guichard, Xavier, 45
Guilbeaux, Henri, 169, 467–68
Gumilev, N. S., 70, 176–77, 178, 468
Guralski, A. (Heifitz), 186
Gusev, S. I., 143, 248
Guyot, Yves, 52, 468

Hammer, Mr., 244, 248
Harmel, 412; see also Jouhaux, Léon
Hartenstein, V. (Sokolov), 18
Hasenclever, Walter, 427, 468
Haywood, Bill, 171
Heckert, Friedrich, 200
Heinrichsohn, Albert, 296
Hellfer, Georges, 147, 182, 468
Henry, Émile, 51, 71, 468
Henry, Fortuné, 16
Hervé, Gustave, 14, 34, 36, 56
Herzen, A. I., 4, 98, 315, 455
Hilferding, Rudolf, 427, 468
Hingleize (brothers), 86
Hitler, xii, xxxi, 203, 393, 395, 403, 405, 413–14, 420–21, 429, 443
Hoffmann, General, 96
Holbein, 353
Hugo, Victor, 55, 307
Huysmans, Camille, 14, 468

Iaroslavsky, 210
Ilić, Danilo, 212, 468
Ilyin-Genevsky, A. F., 243
IMRO, 211
International, Communist. See Communist International
International, Fourth. See Fourth International
International, Socialist. See Socialist International
Irujo, Manuel de, 396
Istrati, Panaït, 295, 296, 321–22, 470
Ionov, Ilya, 93, 146, 248, 305, 331–2
Ivanov, Vsevolod, 194, 308, 470
Ivanov-Razumnik (R. V. Ivanov), 178, 314, 332, 454

Jaurès, Jean, 34, 35, 128, 383, 424, 470
Jeunes-Gardes Socialistes, 14, 470
Joffe, A. A., xvii, 158, 213; death, 254, 265–8, 269, 470–71
Joffe, Maria, 266, 295, 318, 319
Joffe, Nadezhda, xviii
Joffre, General, 60
Jogiches (Tyszko), Leo, 125, 160, 471
Jouhaux, Léon, 383, 404, 412, 458
Jouin, 41, 43
Jouk, Justin, 91
Joyce, James, 178
Julien, Charles-André, 166, 167

Kabakchiev, Hristo, 208, 209
Kaganovich, L. N., 262
Kalinin, M. I., 149, 158, 247, 261, 262, 276, 294, 296
Kamenev, L. B. (Rosenfeld), 114, 117, 128, 140, 145, 180, 185, 192, 214, 246–47, 249, 258–60, 265, 270–71, 301, 363, 366, 473, 500; triumvir, 273, 299, 300; executed, 379, 385
Kamkov, B. D., 139
Kamo (S. A. Ter-Petrosian), 52, 471
Kaplan, Dora, 193
Kappel, V. O., 275
Karakhan, L. N., 274, 471
Karatygin, 288
Karelin, A. A., 141
Karetnik, 143
Kareyev, N. I., 288
Karol, 278
Károlyi, Michael, 96
Karpov, N. I., 243
Karpovich, 330
Kayurov, 301
Kerenskaya, Doctor, 366
Kerensky, A. F., 51n., 69, 154n., 301, 366, 471–72
Keynes, J. M., 120
Kharitonov, 252
Khayn, 289
Kibalchich, Jeannine, xviii, 375, 380, 381, 473, 505
Kibalchich, Laurette, 415, 434, 493–94
Kibalchich, Léon, 3, 4, 5, 7–12 passim, 21–22, 472
Kibalchich, Liuba Russakova, xii, 79, 137, 186, 218, 362, 492
Kibalchich, Nikolai, 3, 472–73
Kibalchich, Raoul, 6, 7, 473
Kibalchich, Victor Lvovich. See Serge, Victor
Kibalchich, Vladimir (Vlady), xxxvii, xxxviii, xix–xx, 183, 186, 190, 205, 218, 264, 279, 303, 305, 318, 322, 354, 355, 356, 357, 362–63, 373, 377, 378–79, 390, 398, 429, 431, 433, 448, 473, 505
Kirov affair, the, 363, 365, 370, 371
Kirov, S. M., 262, 322, 473

Kirshon, V. M., 371
Klement, Rudolf, 401, 402
Klinger, G., 97
Knudsen, Konrad, 393
Koenen, 200
Kohn, Felix, 162
Kokoschka, Oskar, 188
Kokoshkin, F. F., 86
Kolabushkin, 110
Kolarov, Vasil, 124, 208, 209, 474
Kolchak, Admiral, 103, 111, 117, 305n.
Kollontai, Alexandra M., 144, 241, 474
Koltsov, M. Y., 371
Komarov, N. P., 255
Konar, F., 288, 335, 338
Kondratiev, Professor, 288
Konstantinov, 236–37, 238–40
Korvin, Otto, 117
Kotziubinsky, Y. M., 215–16, 474
Kovarsky, 288, 335, 338
Kozlovsky, General, 146, 147, 149, 153
Kozlovsky, M. Y., 114–15, 214
Krassin, L. B., 52, 106, 158, 474
Krauterkrafft, 74
Krenikov, 291
Kreps, 316
Krestinsky, N. N., 189, 196, 274, 388, 474
Kriuchkov, P. P., 311
Krivitsky, Walter, 400, 402, 409, 427
Kronstadt Rising, xxix–xxx, 95, 97, 113, 140, 144, 146–154, 160, 165, 177, 182, 258, 406, 485
Kropotkin, Prince Peter, 11, 48, 51, 59, 144–46, 267–68, 320, 475
Krupskaya, N. K., 205, 316
Krylenko, N. V., 115, 129, 236, 388
Kuchik Khan, 298
Kuchin, G. D., 352
Kun, Béla, 96, 118, 127, 143, 161, 163–64, 186, 220, 225, 475
Kusskova, E. D., 182
Kuusinen, O. V., 129
Kuzmin, N. N., 148–49
Lacombe, 50
Lafargue, Paul, 39, 74
LaFollette, Suzanne, 386
Lagardelle, Hubert, 14, 475
Lakovitsky, Boris Ilyich, 360
Landau, Kurt, 393
Landler, Eugene, 221
Lansbury, George, 118
Largo Caballero, Francisco, 392
Lashevich, M. M., 138–39, 248, 264
Laurat, Lucien, 218, 425, 475
Laval, Pierre, 225, 372, 421
Lavergne, General, 76
Lavrov, P. L., 476
Lazarev, 288, 290
Lazerevich, Nicholas, 376, 476
Lazzari, Costantino, 123, 217
League for the Rights of Man, 370, 386, 387–88, 459
Lebedev (Stepanov), 252
Le Bon, Gustave, 21
Le Dantec, Yves, 24
Lefebvre, Raymond, 123, 129–30
Lefeuvre, René, 476
Lefranc, Jacques, 389
Left Opposition. See Opposition, Left
Léger, Eugène, 209
Lenin, V. I. (Ulianov), xiv, xix, xxx, 20, 70, 76, 82, 86–87, 93, 96–97, 112, 113, 117, 118, 122, 125–26, 131, 132–33, 138, 140, 141, 144, 145, 151, 152, 154, 155–65, 169–70, 192–93, 195, 217, 226, 228, 232, 233–34, 237, 241, 250–51, 257–58, 262, 265, 269, 279, 291, 307, 316, 330, 395, 476, 498–99,

Lenin, V. I. (*continued*), 502; and Terror, 95, 116, 128, 180, 214, 238, 327, 374; and Civil War, 108–9, 275; character, 119–20, 156–57; death, 205–6
Leonidov, 116–17
Leontieva, Tatiana, 18
Leopold III, 381, 479
Lepetit (François Berthon), 122, 129, 130
Lépine, Louis, 33, 35
Lerroux, Alejandro, 64
Levi, Paul, 121, 123, 163, 476
Liabeuf, 34, 35–36
Liasonov, S., 102
Libertad, Albert, 23, 26–27, 40, 61, 476
Lichtenstadt, Vladimir Ossipovich see Mazin, V.
Liebknecht, Karl, 97, 107n., 160, 257, 279, 456, 473, 476
Lilina, Z. I., 83
Litvinov, M. M., 52, 76, 409
Livchitz, Olga Grigorievna, 257
Lloyd George, David, 101
Lockhart, R. Bruce, 76
Lominadze, V. V., 278, 300
Lomov, G. I. (Oppokov), 262
Londres, Albert, 50, 476–77
Longuet, Jean, 72, 477
Loriot, Fernand, 166, 477, 482
Lorulot, André, 44, 477
Lozovsky, S. A., 171, 201, 205, 362
Lukács, Georg, xxv, 218, 220, 226, 477
Lunacharsky, A. V., 101, 141, 158, 315, 477
Lutovinov, Y. K., 227
Luxemburg, Rosa, 79, 124, 160, 218, 462, 471, 477–78
Macdonald, Dwight, 422, 428, 478
McGovern, John, 395
Mach, Ernst, 30
MacNair, John, 339
Maeterlinck, Maurice, 29, 478
Maîtrejean, Rirette, 27, 35, 41–42, 49, 478
Makarov, 288
Makhimson, 249
Makhno, Nestor, 110, 140, 142–43, 157, 478–79
Malaquais, Jean, 413, 479
Malinovsky, R. V., 113–15
Malraux, André, 253, 370, 382
Malvy, 131
Mandel, Georges, 415
Mann, Heinrich, 370, 479
Mao Tse-tung, xxxvii, 257
Marchand, René, 109, 170
Marchlewski, J., 126
Maretsky, 301
Margueritte, Victor, 370
Marinetti, Filippo, 37
Marion, Paul, 225, 275
Markin, 257
Martin, Pierre, 48
Martinet, Marcel, 305, 326, 370, 385, 479
Martov, L. (Julius O. Cederbaum), 128, 180
Marx, 39, 91, 220, 224, 252, 291–92, 299, 320, 399, 402–3, 455, 471, 498
Masaryk, Thomas, 205
Maslow, Arkadi, 202
Masson, André, 424, 473
Matteotti, Giacomo, 217, 219, 397, 479
Maulnier, Thierry, 412
Maura, Antonio, 33
Mauricius, 131, 479
Maurín, Joaquín, 167, 384, 391, 482

Maximalists, 29, 91, 260, 480
Maximov, G. P., 180, 301
Maxton, James, 395, 396
Mayakovsky, V., 101, 230, 234, 309–10, 480, 503
Mazin (Lichtenstadt), V., 90–91, 103–5, 111, 471, 480–81
Mdivani, B., 208
Medvedev, S. P., 144
Melnichansky, G. P., 262
Mena, Marcía, 393
Menchoy, 233
Mensheviks, 87–88, 139, 147, 151, 157, 180, 252, 302, 388, 481
Menzhinsky, V. R., 298
Merezhkovsky, Dmitry, 26
Merle, Eugène, 34
Mesnil, Clara, 166–67, 481
Mesnil, Jacques, 166–67, 171, 305, 326, 370, 481–82
Messing, S. A., 259
Métivier, 19
Meunier, Constantin, 176
Miasnikov, G. I., 154
Michon, Georges, 385
Mikhailov, T. M., 3
Mikoyan, A. I., 262
Miliutin, V. P., 289
Minkov, Ivan, 209
Mirbach, Count, 297
Miro, 66
Modigliani, Giuseppe, 427–28
Moilin, Dr. Tony, 29
Molchanov, 339, 341
Molins y Fábrega, Narciso, 417, 422, 482
Molotov, V. M., 262, 285, 294, 410
Monatte, Pierre, 72, 168, 225, 385, 479, 482, 482
Monier, Élie, 46–47, 50, 458
Morizet, André, 166–67
Moro-Giafferi, M^{e}, 47
Morón, Gabriel, 216, 392
Mostovenko, P. I., 145
Mounier, Emmanuel, 389
Mrachkovsky, S. V., 246, 325
Münzenberg, Willi, 482
Muralov, N. I., 271, 274, 295
Mussolini, xiv, 14, 52, 169, 191, 219, 383, 393, 395, 397, 405, 425, 455

N——, 216
N——, Dr., 321
Narodnaya Volya, 239, 323, 474, 482
Naville, Pierre, 269, 482
Nechayev (Oppositionist), 249, 254
Nechayev, S. G., 82, 239, 483
Negre, José, 404
Negrín Lopez, Juan, 393, 402
Nekrassov, N. V., 301
NEP, 152, 157, 160, 172–3, 231, 232–6, 251, 261, 252, 298
Nesterenko, 95
Nesterov, 343
Neumann, Heinz, 202–3, 278, 483
Nicholas I (Tsar), 181
Nicholas II (Tsar), 62, 239
Nietzsche, xxvi, 38–39, 236
Nikolayenko, Dr., 78, 484
Nikolayev, L. V., 322, 366
Nin, Andrés, 167, 205, 252, 283, 295, 318, 320, 338, 388, 391–95, 396, 484
Nivelle, General, 72
Noske, Gustav, 201, 479, 478
Novomirsky, 88, 141, 182
Novorusky, 112

Okhotnikov, 259
Okhrana, viii, 18, 29, 20, 105–6, 112–15, 116

Olgin, M., 251
Opposition: Workers', 139, 144, 152, 154–55, 160, 170, 227 n., 246, 258, 474, 494; Left, 242–45, 248, 273, 294–95, 344, 356, 385, 394, 406, 408; Joint, 248–50, 251, 252–270; Right, 294, 320, 343, 367; others, 152, 216, 244, 296
Ordzhonikidze, G. K., 91, 158, 208, 269, 298
Orlandis, 166
Ossovsky, Y. A., 270
Ott, 237, 239–40

Paltchinski, 291
Panitza, Todor, 211
Paniushkin, V. L., 154
Pankratov, V. F., 295, 357–58, 363
Panteleyev, L., 231
Parijanine, Maurice, 370, 484
Pascal, Pierre, 169, 170, 182, 318, 484
Pasha, Enver, 127, 485
Pasternak, Boris, 308, 371, 485
Pataud, Emile, 14
Patrick, 29
Paul, Dr., 45
Paul, Emperor, 231
Paz, Magdeleine, 272, 305, 326, 370, 385, 392, 485
Paz, Maurice, 272, 326, 370, 411, 485
Péguy, 60, 485
People's Will Party. See Narodnaya Volya
Perepelkin, 154
Perkus, 149
Perovskaya, S. L., 3, 484
Peshkova, E. P., 374–75
Pestaña, Angel, 119, 122, 135
Pétain, Marshal, 14, 225, 402, 415
Peter the Great, 313, 499
Peters, 98
Petrichenko, S., 154, 485
Petrov, A., 30
Petrovsky, G. I., 262
Petrovsky (poet), 331
Pevzner, K. M., 358, 363
Philip, André, 385
Piatakov, G. L., 158, 201, 215, 228, 259–60, 293
Pilnyak, Boris, xxv, 194, 305, 308, 314, 311–12, 320, 395, 397, 485, 502, 505
Pilsudski, Joseph, 118
Pioch, Georges, 385, 392
Pivert, Marceau, xxxii, 395, 462, 467, 478, 485–86
Platonov, S. F., 288
Plehve, V. K. von, 21, 493
Plekhanov, G. V., 60, 128
Plisnier, Charles, 370, 486
Plyatsky, 236
Pohl, Otto, 190
Poincaré, Raymond, 60, 197, 290
Polivanov, General, 118
Pollak, Oskar, 391, 486
Portez, 66
Pouget, Émile, 14, 460, 486–87, 500
Poulaille, Henry, 370, 385, 418
POUM, xxxii, 67, 391–2, 393, 396, 452, 458, 473, 482, 484, 487
Poznansky, I., 245
Preobrazhensky, E. A., 156, 158, 214, 224, 229, 249–50, 273, 278, 325, 352, 487
Princip, Gavrilo, 212, 488
Prokopovich, S. N., 182, 287
Prudhomme, Sully, 8
Pugachev's rebellion, 346
Pushkov, 232

R——, 214–15

Radek, Karl, 96, 125–27, 158–60, 164, 189–90, 193, 196–98, 227, 253, 258–59, 265, 271, 274, 294, 298, 387, 488 ; character, 159–160
Radić, Stjepan, 213
Rafail, 241–42, 321, 453
Rakosi, Mathyas, 171, 488
Rakovsky, K. G., 118, 124–26, 158, 192, 249, 260, 268, 271, 273–74, 295, 302, 330, 360, 362, 488; killed, 388
Ramishvili, I., 352
Ramzin, Prof. L. K., 288, 290, 309
Rappoport, Charles, 72, 189, 489
Raskolnikov, F. F., 243
Rathenau, Walter, 197
Ravachol (François Koenigstein), 51, 71, 489
Reclus, Élisée, 20, 24, 39, 51, 166, 489
Reed, John, 118, 124, 127, 489
Regler, Gustav, xxxii, 370, 489
Reiss, Elsa, 399, 400
Reiss, Ignace, 381, 398–400, 409
Reynaud, Paul, 47, 404, 415
Rhein, Marc, 393
Riazanov, D. B. (Goldendach), 116, 291–92, 352
Ribas, 66
Ribbentrop, 410
Rictus, Jehan, 20–21, 489
Right Opposition. See Opposition, Right
Rips, Mikhail, 18, 489
Riutin, M. N., 300–1
Rogdayev, N., 141
Roland-Holst, Henriette, 166, 370, 489
Rolland, Romain, i, 78, 166, 169., 178, 311, 323, 369–70, 371, 389, 489–90
Romains, Jules, 26
Rosenberg, Arthur, 202
Rosengoltz, A. P., 108, 275
Rosenthal, Gérard, 269, 400, 490
Rosenzweig, 298
Roshal, S. G., 243
Rosmer, Alfred, 72, 123, 127, 129, 145, 168, 225, 385, 490
Rosselli, Carlo, 397, 490
Rosselli, Nello, 397
Rossi, Angelo (Tasca), 318, 395, 425
Rothstein, 233
Rovira, José, 391
Roy, M. N., 124, 490
Rozanov, V., 236
Rozhkov, N. A., 138
Rubin, N., 288, 292–93
Rudniansky, A. Y., 96
Rühle, Otto, 279, 386
Russakov, A. I., 137, 149, 174, 321–22, 490–91
Russakova, Anita, 339–41, 375, 491
Russakova, Liuba. See Kibalchich, Liuba Russakova
Rutkovsky, 339–42, 491
Rykov, A. I., 114, 117, 246–47, 249, 257, 261, 269, 271, 291, 293–94, 300, 343, 492; executed, 388
Ryss, Salomon, 30
Ryssakov, N., 3, 484

Sabiani, 423
Sachs-Gladnev, S. M., 269
Sadoul, Jacques, 169, 190, 193, 276, 492
Saint-Exupéry, Antoine, 414
Salengro, 383
Salvemini, Gaetano, 370, 492
Samson, J.-P., 422, 493
Sandomirsky, H., 140, 319
Santalov, A. S., 361
Sapronov, T. V., 216, 265, 268, 274, 295, 493

Saragat, Guiseppe, 455
Sartre, Jean-Paul, 413
Savinkov, B. V., 60, 275, 493
Sazonov, Igor., 30
Scheffer, Paul, 266
Schildbach, Gertrude, 399
Schlageter, Albert, 197–98
Schmerling, 184
Schmierer, Paul, 395, 493
Sedov, L. L., 299, 399, 400–1
Seeckt, General Hans von, 203
Seguí, Salvador, 63–66, 68, 493
Séjourné, Laurette. See Kibalchich, Laurette
Seipel, Cardinal, 213, 224
Sellier, Henri, 389
Sellier, Louis, 195
Sémard, Pierre, 195
Sembat, Marcel, 59, 494
Semionov (Chekist), 152
Semionov (S.-R.), 193
Senatskaya, L., 357
Serebriakov, L. P., 221–22, 274
Serge, Victor (Victor Lvovich Kibalchich), childhood and youth, 3–26; early anarchist background, 16–17, 19–20, 23–28, 35–41, 50–51; early Russian background, 3–5, 29ff., 64, 70; migrates to France, 21–60, 68–77; in "Bonnot affair," 39–50; imprisoned in France, 44, 49, 53–58; release, 58–61; in Barcelona, 61–68; interned at Précigné, 74–78; travels to Russia, 78–81; early days in Russia, 82–89, 96–101, 105; attitude to Russian Revolution, 70, 94, 131–34, 139–40, 182–83, 302–3, 430, 439–40; works in Comintern, 88–94, 96–97, 105–6, 118–28, 157–58, 160–71, 182–226; and Civil War, 89, 98, 104–5, 106–112, 118, 138; and Okhrana records, viii–ix, 106, 112–116; and Kronstadt rising, 146–50, 154; founds "French Commune," 174; in Germany, 183–205; in Vienna, 205–26; and La Fédération Balkanique, 210–12; returns to Russia, 227; and Left Opposition, 224, 242–46, 247, 248, 248–60, 260–1, 263–70, 271–73, 274–78, 283–84, 294, 296–97, 299, 301–2, 319, 324–26, 356–59, 367, 385, 408, 431, 441; other dissident contacts in Russia, 86, 87, 110, 121–22, 128, 139–40, 141–42, 144–45, 154, 166–69, 172, 177–82, 182, 193–94, 268–69, 290–1, 297, 314, 318–20, 321, 322–23, 323, 351–52, 375; experience of NEP, 226, 231–42; expelled from Party, 278–79; first Soviet imprisonment, 279–81; literary interests, 303–6, 354–55, 356–57, 368–69, 413, 437; literary contacts, 84–85, 88, 96, 101–3, 112, 176–77, 182, 220–21, 229, 234, 304–16, 331–32, 390–1, 413, 414–15; persecution in Russia, 316–19, 320–22, 325; arrest, 329–30; second Soviet imprisonment, 330–43; deportation to Orenburg, 344–69, 371–37; release, 373–75; return to Belgium, 376–80; in Paris, 381–417 on Popular Front, 380–81, 383–84; exposes Moscow Trails, 384–90, 394, 400–1; and Spanish Civil War, 391–93, 395–96, 404, 430–31; and Reiss affair, 397–400; and Fourth International, 401–2,

406–8; during "phony war" 411–17; fugitive after collapse of France, 417–28; voyage to Mexico, 428–35; illnesses, 57–58, 303, 363–65, 411; personal outlook, 10–11, 16, 31–32, 36, 44, 52, 66, 74, 80–81, 86–87, 133, 155–6, 173, 179, 182–83, 273, 302–3, 307–8, 326–28, 405, 429–30, 436–48
Sergei, Grand Duke, 21, 278
Sermuks, 245, 250
Serova, Julia, 114
Serrati, Giacinto, 125, 217
Serre, Edouard, 392, 395
Séverac, Jean-Baptiste, 411, 494
Séverine, 48
Shablin, N., 129, 209
Shaginyan, Marietta, 315
Shakhty trial, 311
Shapiro, A., 140
Shatov, Bill., 97, 99, 104, 106, 494
Shchegolev, P. E., 112, 113, 236
Sheboldayev, B. P., 286
Sher, V. V., 288, 292
Shevchenko, Taras, 368
Shingarev, A. I., 86
Shklovsky, 83
Shliapnikov, A. G., 144, 494
Shumsky, A. I., 301
Simić, Božin, 212
Sindicato Libre, 58, 224
Sirola, Yrjö, 96, 129
Skrypnik, N. A., 131, 262, 301
Slepkov, A., 301
Slivkin, 186
Smilga, I. T., 126, 158, 250, 259–60, 273, 294, 299, 325, 494–95; executed, 388
Smirnov, I. N., 108, 185, 268, 274–75, 294, 325, 385, 495
Smirnov, V. M., 216, 265, 295, 495
Sneevliet, Hendricus, 394, 396–98, 400, 416
Sobol, Andrei, 309
Sobolevicius (Sénine), 380
Socialist International, 192, 290, 292, 391, 453, 469
Social-Revolutionaries, 70–71, 113, 139, 147, 193, 351, 482–83, 495–96
Sokolnikov, G. Y., 158, 265
Sokolov, A. (Hartenstein), 18–19
Solntsev, E., 295
Sologub, Feodor, 314
Solovian, 338, 340, 344
Sorel, Georges, 30, 38, 496
Sosnovsky, L. S., 274, 295
Souchy, Augustin, 122
Soudy, André, 40, 43, 46
Souritz, 412
Souvarine, Boris, 166, 168, 193, 199, 215, 225, 370, 380, 496
Spencer, Herbert, 4
Spengler, Oswald, 188
Spinasse, Charles, 425
Spiridonova, M., 139
Stalin, J. V. (Djugashvili), i, vii, ix, xi, xviii, xxv, xxxi, xxxiv, xxxvii, 52, 92, 98, 126, 246–47, 253, 257, 262, 269, 273, 292, 299, 311, 358, 365, 367, 368, 371, 385, 413–14, 429, 432, 437, 454, 459, 471–73, 476, 482, 500, 502, 503, maneuvers of, 232, 246, 249, 294–95, 324–5; and Serge, 371
Stalin, Nadezhda. See Alliluyeva, Nadezhda
Stambulisky, Alexander, 208
Starhemberg, Prince, 223
Stassova, E. D., 92, 277, 370
Steinheil, Mme, 48
Sten, Y., 300–1

Stetsky, A. I., 248
Stinnes, Hugo, 187, 496
Stirner, Max, 28, 496
Stolypin, P. A., 29, 91
Stuchka, P. I., 93, 496
Stürgkh, Count von, 62, 451
Sudakov, 355
Sukhanov, N. N., xxiv, 288, 290, 293
Sulimov , Danil Yegorovich, 300
Sun Yat-sen, 213
Suritz, Y. Z., 392, 496–97
Svalova, L., 357
Svoboda, 18
Syrtsov, S. I., 300

Tagantsev, 176
Tagore, Rabindranath, 288
Tarle, Y. V., 288, 290
Terracini, Umberto, 123, 219
Thaelmann, Ernst, 329–30, 497
Thalheimer, August, 202, 204
Thomas, Albert, 169, 492, 497
Thorez, Maurice, 412
Tikhon, Patriarch, 162
Tikhonov, Nikolai, 371
Timofeyev, A., 193
Togliatti, Palmiro (Ercoli), 318, 457
Toller, Ernst, xxv, 315
Tolmachev, V., 301
Tolstoy, Alexei, 236, 308, 313, 497
Toman, Karl, 222
Tomp, Yan, 207
Tomsky, M. P., 247, 293, 294, 300
Tresca, Carlo, 386
Trilisser, M. A., 298
Trotsky, L. D. (Bronstein), xii, xxv, xxviii, xxix, xxxvi, xxxvii, 60, 86, 97, 108–11, 116–19, 123, 125–26, 128, 135, 138, 140, 144, 151, 154, 158, 162, 164, 166, 170, 194, 198, 203, 214–15, 224–25, 228, 244–50, 253, 255–56, 257, 259–60, 262–75, 277, 279, 284, 294–95, 298–99, 301–2, 320, 325, 338, 352, 361–62, 379–80, 383–85, 387, 391, 400, 454, 473, 485–86, 499, 502–3, 504–5; murdered, 427; critique of, 119, 164-66, 406–8, 441
Tsankov, Professor, 208
Tsereteli, 139, 483
Tsintsadze, A. (Koté), 52, 473
Tsyurupa, Alexander, 132, 135
Tsvetkova, 110
Tubin, Sasha, 129–30
Tukhachevsky, M. N., 126, 151–53, 396–97, 402
Turati, Filippo, 217, 498
Tverskoy, M., 284
Tyutchev, Feodor, xi, 227

Uglanov, N., 262
Ullrich, Vassily, 185
Unschlicht, J. S., 262
Upstein, Fanya, 357
Uritsky, M. S., 93, 498
Urquart, 244

Vaillant, Auguste, 42, 51, 458, 498
Vaillant-Couturier, Paul, 166–68, 260, 276, 281, 498
Valet, René, 25, 43, 458, 467, 498
Valois, Georges, 38, 499
Vandervelde, Émile, xxv, 15, 192, 292, 372, 379, 499
Vassilev, Paul, 315
Vergeat, Jean, 129, 130
Verhaeren, Emile, 21, 169, 499
Vesioly, Artem, 315
Vidal, Germinal, 67, 499
Vildrac, Charles, 370
Vinaver, 374

Vlahov, Dimitar, 211, 499
Voline (Boris Eichenbaum), 127–28, 141–42, 180, 499
Volkov, P., xxxvi, 320
Volodarsky, V. (M. M. Goldstein), 93, 193, 499
von Mekk, 291
Voroshilov, K., 247, 262, 263, 294, 409–10
Vorovsky, V. V., 196, 259
Vuyovich, V., 190, 199, 274

War Communism, 135, 137, 152, 155, 172, 368, 485
Werth, Léon, 305, 370, 499
Wijnkoop, David, 124, 499–500
Wolf, Erwin, 252, 393
Wolf, Fritz, 252
Wolfe, M. M., 288, 335, 338
Workers' Opposition. See Opposition, Workers'
Wrangel, Baron, 143, 164
Wullens, Maurice, 370, 385, 406, 500

X——, 445
Xenofontov, 237

Yagoda, G. G., 294., 298, 306, 307, 312, 339, 341–42, 371., 375, 388
Yakovin, G. Y., 243, 271, 295
Yakubovich, 189
Yankov, Kosta, 209
Yarchuk, E., 141, 145
Yaroslavsky, Y. M., 262, 301
Yenukidze, A. S., 88, 366–67
Yesenin, Sergei, xxv, 101, 177, 229–31, 309, 500; death of, 229–30
Yevdokimov, G. Y., xxviii, 92, 98, 119, 232, 246, 248, 260, 262, 270, 500;
Yezhov, N. I., 312, 313
Yudenich, General, 103, 106, 483
Yurovsky, 288
Yvetôt, Georges, 14, 500

Zamyatin, Evgeny, 308, 312, 463
Zeigner, Erich, 200, 203
Zetkin, Clara, 193, 500
Zévaès, M^e Alexandre (Bourson), 59
Zhelyabov, A. I., 3, 484
Zhuchenko, Zinaida, 29
Zinoviev, G. Y. (Radomyslsky), xxvii, 81, 89, 90, 92–93, 96, 99, 103, 104, 108, 112, 117–18, 120, 125, 127, 129, 130, 132, 144, 146, 150, 158, 165, 180, 185, 194, 203, 207, 217–18, 225, 232, 245–49, 253, 255–56, 259–60, 263–65, 267, 269–71, 273, 299, 301, 363; character, 84, 158, 207, 269; executed, 385
Zogu (King Zog), 213
Zola, 9
Zorin, S. S., 92, 148, 150, 153, 248
Zugazagoitia, Julián, 396

TITLES IN SERIES

For a complete list of titles, visit www.nyrb.com or write to:
Catalog Requests, NYRB, 435 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014

J.R. ACKERLEY Hindoo Holiday*
J.R. ACKERLEY My Dog Tulip*
J.R. ACKERLEY My Father and Myself*
J.R. ACKERLEY We Think the World of You*
HENRY ADAMS The Jeffersonian Transformation
CÉLESTE ALBARET Monsieur Proust
DANTE ALIGHIERI The Inferno
DANTE ALIGHIERI The New Life
WILLIAM ATTAWAY Blood on the Forge
W.H. AUDEN (EDITOR) The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard
W.H. AUDEN W.H. Auden's Book of Light Verse
ERICH AUERBACH Dante: Poet of the Secular World
DOROTHY BAKER Cassandra at the Wedding
J.A. BAKER The Peregrine
HONORÉ DE BALZAC The Unknown Masterpiece *and* Gambara*
MAX BEERBOHM Seven Men
STEPHEN BENATAR Wish Her Safe at Home*
FRANS G. BENGTSSON The Long Ships*
ALEXANDER BERKMAN Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist
GEORGES BERNANOS Mouchette
ADOLFO BIOY CASARES Asleep in the Sun
ADOLFO BIOY CASARES The Invention of Morel
CAROLINE BLACKWOOD Corrigan*
CAROLINE BLACKWOOD Great Granny Webster*
NICOLAS BOUVIER The Way of the World
MALCOLM BRALY On the Yard*
MILLEN BRAND The Outward Room*
JOHN HORNE BURNS The Gallery
ROBERT BURTON The Anatomy of Melancholy
CAMARA LAYE The Radiance of the King
GIROLAMO CARDANO The Book of My Life
DON CARPENTER Hard Rain Falling*
J.L. CARR A Month in the Country
BLAISE CENDRARS Moravagine
EILEEN CHANG Love in a Fallen City
UPAMANYU CHATTERJEE English, August: An Indian Story
NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian
ANTON CHEKHOV Peasants and Other Stories
RICHARD COBB Paris and Elsewhere
COLETTE The Pure and the Impure
JOHN COLLIER Fancies and Goodnights
CARLO COLLODI The Adventures of Pinocchio*
IVY COMPTON-BURNETT A House and Its Head
IVY COMPTON-BURNETT Manservant and Maidservant
BARBARA COMYNS The Vet's Daughter
EVAN S. CONNELL The Diary of a Rapist
ALBERT COSSERY The Jokers*
ALBERT COSSERY Proud Beggars*

* *Also available as an electronic book.*

HAROLD CRUSE The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual
ASTOLPHE DE CUSTINE Letters from Russia
LORENZO DA PONTE Memoirs
ELIZABETH DAVID A Book of Mediterranean Food
ELIZABETH DAVID Summer Cooking
L.J. DAVIS A Meaningful Life*
VIVANT DENON No Tomorrow/Point de lendemain
MARIA DERMOÛT The Ten Thousand Things
DER NISTER The Family Mashber
TIBOR DÉRY Niki: The Story of a Dog
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE The Exploits and Adventures of Brigadier Gerard
CHARLES DUFF A Handbook on Hanging
BRUCE DUFFY The World As I Found It*
DAPHNE DU MAURIER Don't Look Now: Stories
ELAINE DUNDY The Dud Avocado*
ELAINE DUNDY The Old Man and Me*
G.B. EDWARDS The Book of Ebenezer Le Page
MARCELLUS EMANTS A Posthumous Confession
EURIPIDES Grief Lessons: Four Plays; translated by Anne Carson
J.G. FARRELL Troubles*
J.G. FARRELL The Siege of Krishnapur*
J.G. FARRELL The Singapore Grip*
ELIZA FAY Original Letters from India
KENNETH FEARING The Big Clock
KENNETH FEARING Clark Gifford's Body
FÉLIX FÉNÉON Novels in Three Lines*
M.I. FINLEY The World of Odysseus
THEODOR FONTANE Irretrievable*
EDWIN FRANK (EDITOR) Unknown Masterpieces
MASANOBU FUKUOKA The One-Straw Revolution*
MARC FUMAROLI When the World Spoke French
CARLO EMILIO GADDA That Awful Mess on the Via Merulana
MAVIS GALLANT The Cost of Living: Early and Uncollected Stories*
MAVIS GALLANT Paris Stories*
MAVIS GALLANT Varieties of Exile*
GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ Clandestine in Chile: The Adventures of Miguel Littín
ALAN GARNER Red Shift*
THÉOPHILE GAUTIER My Fantoms
JEAN GENET Prisoner of Love
ÉLISABETH GILLE The Mirador: Dreamed Memories of Irène Némirovsky by Her Daughter*
JOHN GLASSCO Memoirs of Montparnasse*
P.V. GLOB The Bog People: Iron-Age Man Preserved
EDMOND AND JULES DE GONCOURT Pages from the Goncourt Journals
EDWARD GOREY (EDITOR) The Haunted Looking Glass
A.C. GRAHAM Poems of the Late T'ang
WILLIAM LINDSAY GRESHAM Nightmare Alley*
EMMETT GROGAN Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps
VASILY GROSSMAN Everything Flows*
VASILY GROSSMAN Life and Fate*
VASILY GROSSMAN The Road*
OAKLEY HALL Warlock
PATRICK HAMILTON The Slaves of Solitude
PATRICK HAMILTON Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky

PETER HANDKE Short Letter, Long Farewell
PETER HANDKE Slow Homecoming
ELIZABETH HARDWICK The New York Stories of Elizabeth Hardwick*
ELIZABETH HARDWICK Seduction and Betrayal*
ELIZABETH HARDWICK Sleepless Nights*
L.P. HARTLEY Eustace and Hilda: A Trilogy*
L.P. HARTLEY The Go-Between*
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE Twenty Days with Julian & Little Bunny by Papa
GILBERT HIGHET Poets in a Landscape
JANET HOBHOUSE The Furies
HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL The Lord Chandos Letter
JAMES HOGG The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner
RICHARD HOLMES Shelley: The Pursuit
ALISTAIR HORNE A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962*
GEOFFREY HOUSEHOLD Rogue Male*
WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS Indian Summer
BOHUMIL HRABAL Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age*
RICHARD HUGHES A High Wind in Jamaica*
RICHARD HUGHES In Hazard
RICHARD HUGHES The Fox in the Attic (The Human Predicament, Vol. 1)
RICHARD HUGHES The Wooden Shepherdess (The Human Predicament, Vol. 2)
MAUDE HUTCHINS Victorine
YASUSHI INOUE Tun-huang*
HENRY JAMES The Ivory Tower
HENRY JAMES The New York Stories of Henry James*
HENRY JAMES The Other House
HENRY JAMES The Outcry
TOVE JANSSON Fair Play
TOVE JANSSON The Summer Book
TOVE JANSSON The True Deceiver
RANDALL JARRELL (EDITOR) Randall Jarrell's Book of Stories
DAVID JONES In Parenthesis
KABIR Songs of Kabir; translated by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra*
FRIGYES KARINTHY A Journey Round My Skull
HELEN KELLER The World I Live In
YASHAR KEMAL Memed, My Hawk
YASHAR KEMAL They Burn the Thistles
MURRAY KEMPTON Part of Our Time: Some Ruins and Monuments of the Thirties
DAVID KIDD Peking Story*
ROBERT KIRK The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies
ARUN KOLATKAR Jejuri
DEZSŐ KOSZTOLÁNYI Skylark*
TÉTÉ-MICHEL KPOMASSIE An African in Greenland
GYULA KRÚDY The Adventures of Sindbad*
GYULA KRÚDY Sunflower*
SIGIZMUND KRZHIZHANOVSKY The Letter Killers Club*
SIGIZMUND KRZHIZHANOVSKY Memories of the Future
MARGARET LEECH Reveille in Washington: 1860–1865*
PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR Between the Woods and the Water*
PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR Mani: Travels in the Southern Peloponnese*
PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR Roumeli: Travels in Northern Greece*
PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR A Time of Gifts*
PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR A Time to Keep Silence*

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR The Traveller's Tree*
D.B. WYNDHAM LEWIS AND CHARLES LEE (EDITORS) The Stuffed Owl
GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG The Waste Books
JAKOV LIND Soul of Wood and Other Stories
H.P. LOVECRAFT AND OTHERS The Colour Out of Space
DWIGHT MACDONALD Masscult and Midcult: Essays Against the American Grain*
NORMAN MAILER Miami and the Siege of Chicago*
JANET MALCOLM In the Freud Archives
JEAN-PATRICK MANCHETTE Fatale*
OSIP MANDELSTAM The Selected Poems of Osip Mandelstam
OLIVIA MANNING Fortunes of War: The Balkan Trilogy
OLIVIA MANNING School for Love*
JAMES VANCE MARSHALL Walkabout*
GUY DE MAUPASSANT Afloat
GUY DE MAUPASSANT Alien Hearts*
JAMES MCCOURT Mawrdew Czgowchwz*
HENRI MICHAUX Miserable Miracle
JESSICA MITFORD Hons and Rebels
JESSICA MITFORD Poison Penmanship*
NANCY MITFORD Madame de Pompadour*
HENRY DE MONTHERLANT Chaos and Night
BRIAN MOORE The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*
BRIAN MOORE The Mangan Inheritance*
ALBERTO MORAVIA Boredom*
ALBERTO MORAVIA Contempt*
JAN MORRIS Conundrum
JAN MORRIS Hav*
PENELOPE MORTIMER The Pumpkin Eater*
ÁLVARO MUTIS The Adventures and Misadventures of Maqroll
L.H. MYERS The Root and the Flower*
NESCIO Amsterdam Stories*
DARCY O'BRIEN A Way of Life, Like Any Other
YURI OLESHA Envy*
IONA AND PETER OPIE The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren
IRIS OWENS After Claude*
RUSSELL PAGE The Education of a Gardener
ALEXANDROS PAPADIAMANTIS The Murderess
BORIS PASTERNAK, MARINA TSVETAYEVA, AND RAINER MARIA RILKE Letters, Summer 1926
CESARE PAVESE The Moon and the Bonfires
CESARE PAVESE The Selected Works of Cesare Pavese
LUIGI PIRANDELLO The Late Mattia Pascal
ANDREY PLATONOV The Foundation Pit
ANDREY PLATONOV Soul and Other Stories
J.F. POWERS Morte d'Urban
J.F. POWERS The Stories of J.F. Powers
J.F. POWERS Wheat That Springeth Green
CHRISTOPHER PRIEST Inverted World
BOLESŁAW PRUS The Doll*
RAYMOND QUENEAU We Always Treat Women Too Well
RAYMOND QUENEAU Witch Grass
RAYMOND RADIGUET Count d'Orgel's Ball
JULES RENARD Nature Stories*
JEAN RENOIR Renoir, My Father

GREGOR VON REZZORI An Ermine in Czernopol*
GREGOR VON REZZORI Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*
GREGOR VON REZZORI The Snows of Yesteryear: Portraits for an Autobiography*
TIM ROBINSON Stones of Aran: Labyrinth
TIM ROBINSON Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage
MILTON ROKEACH The Three Christs of Ypsilanti*
FR. ROLFE Hadrian the Seventh
GILLIAN ROSE Love's Work
WILLIAM ROUGHEAD Classic Crimes
CONSTANCE ROURKE American Humor: A Study of the National Character
TAYEB SALIH Season of Migration to the North
TAYEB SALIH The Wedding of Zein*
GERSHOM SCHOLEM Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship
DANIEL PAUL SCHREBER Memoirs of My Nervous Illness
JAMES SCHUYLER Alfred and Guinevere
JAMES SCHUYLER What's for Dinner?*
LEONARDO SCIASCIA The Day of the Owl
LEONARDO SCIASCIA Equal Danger
LEONARDO SCIASCIA The Moro Affair
LEONARDO SCIASCIA To Each His Own
LEONARDO SCIASCIA The Wine-Dark Sea
VICTOR SEGALEN René Leys
PHILIPE-PAUL DE SÉGUR Defeat: Napoleon's Russian Campaign
VICTOR SERGE The Case of Comrade Tulayev*
VICTOR SERGE Conquered City*
VICTOR SERGE Memoirs of a Revolutionary
VICTOR SERGE Unforgiving Years
SHCHEDRIN The Golovlyov Family
GEORGES SIMENON Act of Passion*
GEORGES SIMENON Dirty Snow*
GEORGES SIMENON The Engagement
GEORGES SIMENON The Man Who Watched Trains Go By
GEORGES SIMENON Monsieur Monde Vanishes*
GEORGES SIMENON Pedigree*
GEORGES SIMENON Red Lights
GEORGES SIMENON The Strangers in the House
GEORGES SIMENON Three Bedrooms in Manhattan*
GEORGES SIMENON Tropic Moon*
GEORGES SIMENON The Widow*
CHARLES SIMIC Dime-Store Alchemy: The Art of Joseph Cornell
MAY SINCLAIR Mary Olivier: A Life*
TESS SLESINGER The Unpossessed: A Novel of the Thirties
VLADIMIR SOROKIN Ice Trilogy*
VLADIMIR SOROKIN The Queue
DAVID STACTON The Judges of the Secret Court*
JEAN STAFFORD The Mountain Lion
CHRISTINA STEAD Letty Fox: Her Luck
GEORGE R. STEWART Names on the Land
STENDHAL The Life of Henry Brulard
ADALBERT STIFTER Rock Crystal
THEODOR STORM The Rider on the White Horse
JEAN STROUSE Alice James: A Biography*
HOWARD STURGIS Belchamber

ITALO SVEVO As a Man Grows Older
HARVEY SWADOS Nights in the Gardens of Brooklyn
A.J.A. SYMONS The Quest for Corvo
ELIZABETH TAYLOR Angel*
ELIZABETH TAYLOR A Game of Hide and Seek*
HENRY DAVID THOREAU The Journal: 1837–1861*
TATYANA TOLSTAYA The Slynx
TATYANA TOLSTAYA White Walls: Collected Stories
EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author
LIONEL TRILLING The Liberal Imagination
LIONEL TRILLING The Middle of the Journey
IVAN TURGENEV Virgin Soil
JULES VALLÈS The Child
MARK VAN DOREN Shakespeare
CARL VAN VECHTEN The Tiger in the House
ELIZABETH VON ARNIM The Enchanted April*
EDWARD LEWIS WALLANT The Tenants of Moonbloom
ROBERT WALSER Berlin Stories*
ROBERT WALSER Jakob von Gunten
REX WARNER Men and Gods
SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER Lolly Willowes*
SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER Mr. Fortune*
SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER Summer Will Show*
ALEKSANDER WAT My Century
C.V. WEDGWOOD The Thirty Years War
SIMONE WEIL AND RACHEL BESPALOFF War and the Iliad
GLENWAY WESCOTT Apartment in Athens*
GLENWAY WESCOTT The Pilgrim Hawk*
REBECCA WEST The Fountain Overflows
EDITH WHARTON The New York Stories of Edith Wharton*
PATRICK WHITE Riders in the Chariot
T.H. WHITE The Goshawk
JOHN WILLIAMS Butcher's Crossing*
JOHN WILLIAMS Stoner*
ANGUS WILSON Anglo-Saxon Attitudes
EDMUND WILSON Memoirs of Hecate County
RUDOLF AND MARGARET WITTKOWER Born Under Saturn
GEOFFREY WOLFF Black Sun*
FRANCIS WYNDHAM The Complete Fiction
JOHN WYNDHAM The Chrysalids
STEFAN ZWEIG Beware of Pity*
STEFAN ZWEIG Chess Story*
STEFAN ZWEIG Journey Into the Past
STEFAN ZWEIG The Post-Office Girl

A NEW YORK REVIEW BOOKS ORIGINAL
Translated from the French by Peter Sedgwick
with George Paizis

"This book is a fiery testament to political conscience and revolutionary hope."
—MIKE DAVIS, AUTHOR OF *CITY OF QUARTZ*

Victor Serge is one of the great men of the 20th century—and one of its great writers too. He was an anarchist, an agitator, a revolutionary, an exile, a historian of his times, as well as a brilliant novelist, and in *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* he devotes all his passion and genius to describing this extraordinary—and exemplary—career. Serge tells of his upbringing among exiles and conspirators, of his involvement with the notorious Bonnot Gang and his years in prison, of his role in the Russian Revolution, and of the Revolution's collapse into despotism and terror. Expelled from the Soviet Union, Serge went to Paris, where he evaded the KGB and the Nazis before fleeing to Mexico. *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* recounts a thrilling life on the front lines of history and includes vivid portraits not only of Trotsky, Lenin, and Stalin but of countless other figures who struggled to remake the world.

Peter Sedgwick's fine translation of *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* was abridged when first published in 1963. This is the first edition in English to present the entirety of Serge's book.

"I can't think of anyone who has written about the revolutionary movement in [the 20th century] with Serge's combination of moral insight and intellectual richness."
—DWIGHT MACDONALD

"Serge is one of the most compelling of twentieth-century ethical and literary heroes."
—SUSAN SONTAG

Cover image: Solomon Nikritin, *Man and Cloud*, 1930; G. Costakis Collection of the State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece
Cover design: Katy Homans

nyrb
CLASSIC
HISTORY
MEMOIR